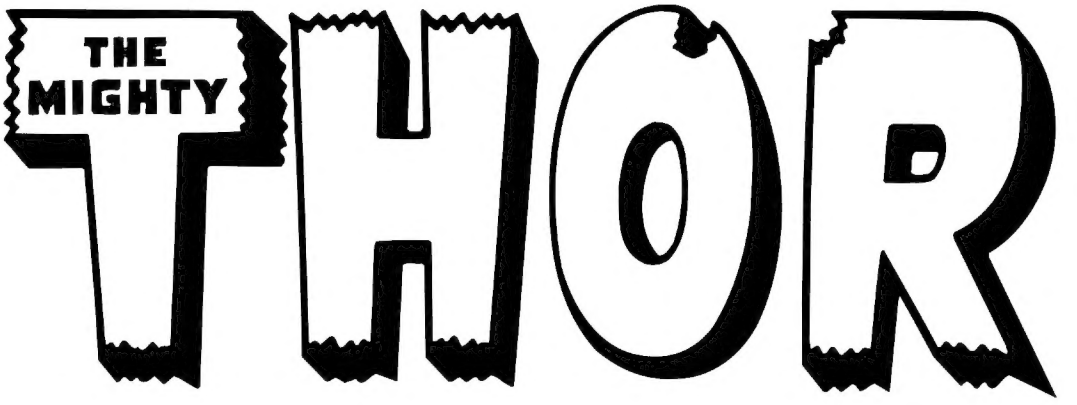
MARVEL MASTERWORKS

BY STAN LEE & JACK KIRBY

MARVEL

MARVEL MASTERWORKS

PRESENTS



VOLUME 3

COLLECTING

JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY Nos. 111-120

& ANNUAL No. 1

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MARVEL MASTERWORKS
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THE
MIGHTY THOR
JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY NOS. 111-120 & ANNUAL NO. 1

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MARVEL MASTERWORKS
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"The Coming of Loki!"

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"The Boyhood of Loki!"

Journey Into Mystery #114, March 1965
"The Stronger I Am, the Sooner I Die!"
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"Set Sail!"

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INTRODUCTION
BY STAN LEE

Hail, Asgard!

Man, how I loved writing the wild adventures of the God of Thunder! It's hard to explain the kick I got out of typing stuff like "Onward! For Asgard and the Realm Eternal!" "To me, mighty Mjolnir!" and one of my favorites, "Odin is the way and the wrath and the wonder!" You've gotta admit it's not your typical comic book lingo!

And has there ever been a more colorful cast of characters than Thor, Loki, Odin, Balder, Sif, the Storm Giants, the Trolls and, of course, by contrast, we had the mortal Don Blake and Jane Foster—I could go on and on but I just remembered I seem to have an intro to write.

Even as you peruse these carefully crafted words you and I are both aware that there's hardly any adventure-loving reader who isn't as much a fan of Thor as we are. But there's always the chance that some Thunder God aficionados may have missed some of the early stories in the mighty collection—stories that date back to the '60s when Jack Kirby and I had such a ball doing our own Marvel-style versions of the fabulous Norse legends. And that's why, out of the kindness of our hearts, we have fashioned for you Volume 3 of one of the greatest series in contemporary literature, *Marvel Masterworks*—the Thor edition.

Wait'll you see the wonderment in store for you on the pages ahead. For starters, you'll find our hammer-wielding hero battling both Mr. Hyde and the Cobra in a desperate effort to save the life of the girl he loves. And, as an added treat, every one of our thrillers is followed by the now-classic Tales of Asgard.

One question that has been asked of me more than almost any other is "If Thor battled the Hulk, who'd win?" Well, you'll have a chance to find our in our next unforgettable thriller. And as an added treat, Tales of Asgard will give you the story of Loki's youth, and how he became the embodiment of evil that he is now.

Next, Thor actually reveals his true identity to his beloved Jane Foster in "A World Gone Mad!" You won't forget this classic too soon, while Tales of Asgard continues with the amazing boyhood of Loki.

Here's a question for you. How do you defeat someone who keeps absorbing your own power?

Thor has to solve that riddle or go down to defeat as he battles the incredible Absorbing Man! Meanwhile, for a change of pace, Tales of Asgard offers our own Norse version of Little Red Riding Hood! You won't wanna miss this one!

Can you imagine what would happen if Loki actually captured Jane Foster, the girl Thor loves?

Well, when you read this one, you'll learn what "vengeance" really means! Meanwhile, in Tales of Asgard, needing a little excitement, Thor battles the deadly Storm Giants.

This one you'd never expect! In "The Trial of the Gods" Loki actually defeats our hero! No, it's not a dream or an imaginary story. Just wait'll you read it! After all, even a bad guy ought'a win some time! And Loki is also at his most evil in this issue's Tales of Asgard.

Believe it or not, in "Into the Blaze of Battle" Jack and I actually managed to inject Communism into our wild thriller! How? You'll haveta see for yourself, while if Thor doesn't fix the mighty Odin-Sword, the entire Asgard realm will be destroyed!

In "To Kill a Thunder God," Thor has to find a way to defeat the Destroyer—who cannot be defeated! Hey, it wouldn't be any fun if we made things too easy for our hero, would it? Meanwhile, in Tales of Asgard, you'll learn about The Crimson Hand as one of the greatest quests of all time is about to begin.

Just for variety, our next terrific tale mostly takes place here on Earth instead of Asgard, but the danger to Thor is just as great as he once again has to face a man who can be as powerful as he is—the fiendish Absorbing Man. Meanwhile, Odin leads his Asgardians on the most dangerous and strangest quest of all.

Okay, here's the one everyone has been waiting for. Thor almost lost his last battle with the Absorbing Man, right? Well, our readers demanded a sequel and here it is, even more exciting than ever! While, in Tales of Asgard, Odin and his crew set sail to begin one of the strangest voyages of all time.

And now, here's the one the world has been waiting for. If you think Thor's battle against the Hulk was tough, wait'll you see him fighting another immortal, an Olympian, one as powerful as he! You've guessed it—it's Thor vs. Hercules! The two mightiest beings in all of legendom battling it out in the kind of thriller only Marvel can provide.

Plus, because Marvel is so notoriously big-hearted, we replaced our Tales of Asgard in this special Annual issue with something new and unique. We allow our mortal, Earthbound readers to gaze upon the wonders of Asgardian street scenes, sights no human has ever witnessed before. No need to thank us; we did it because we wanted to see these scenes ourselves!

Now then, although I've so generously walked you through some of the enchantment you'll find on the pages ahead, nothing can substitute for reading these spectacular stories with your own eyes, at your own pace. I've only offered you the tip of the Asgardian iceberg; the real thrills and wonder are on the pages ahead, in every eye-popping illustration, every drama-tinged panel, and each and every caption and dialogue balloon.

In fact, I'll let you in on a little secret. When I started writing this magnificently worded intro, I had no intention of discussing each and every story that was featured in each and every issue. But, as I looked though the books themselves, I got so carried away, so caught up in the action, the drama, the dazzling artwork, that I actually stopped and re-read every single one of the stories, and y'know something? Even though I had a hand in doing them—I loved each and every panel!

I envy those of you who'll be reading these now-classic tales for the first time. And to you long-time readers who want to recapture the fun and excitement you had at your first reading, I'm right here with you in spirit, digging each page as much as I did when Jack and I created them.

EXCELSIOR!

2010

JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY WITH THE MIGHTY THOR

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

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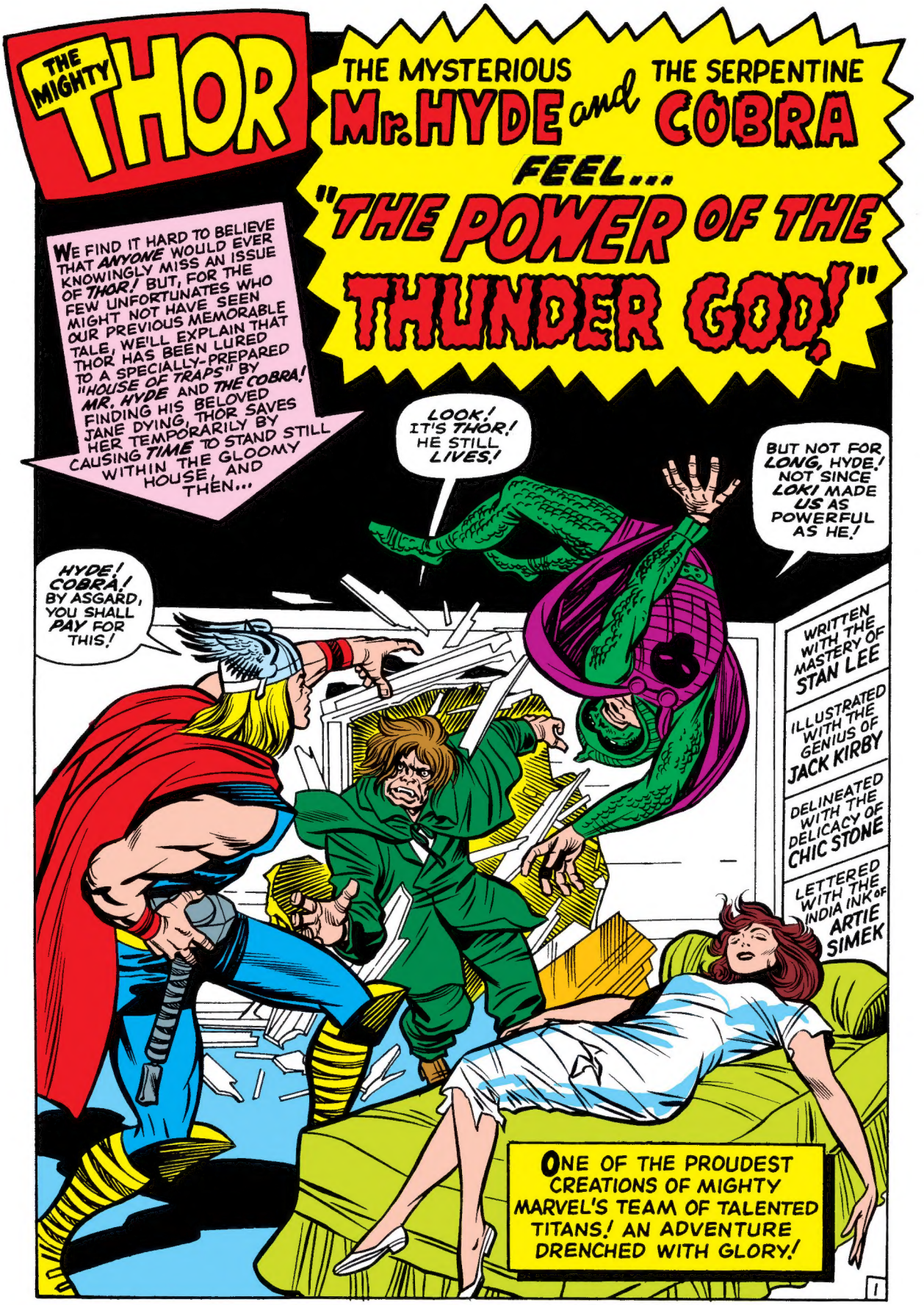
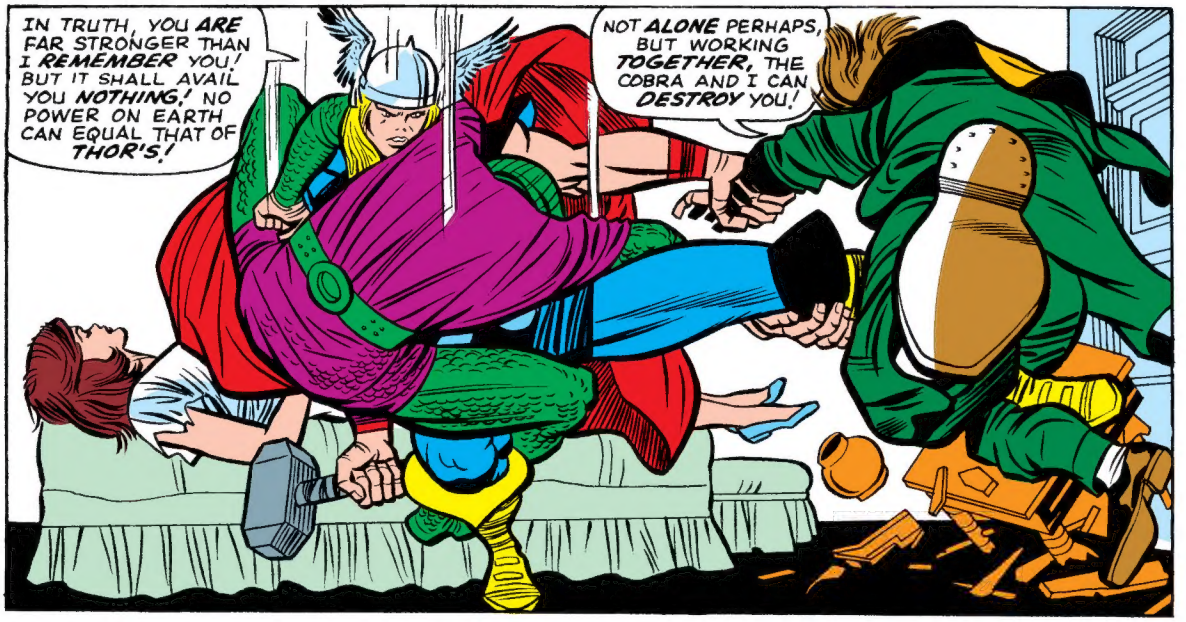
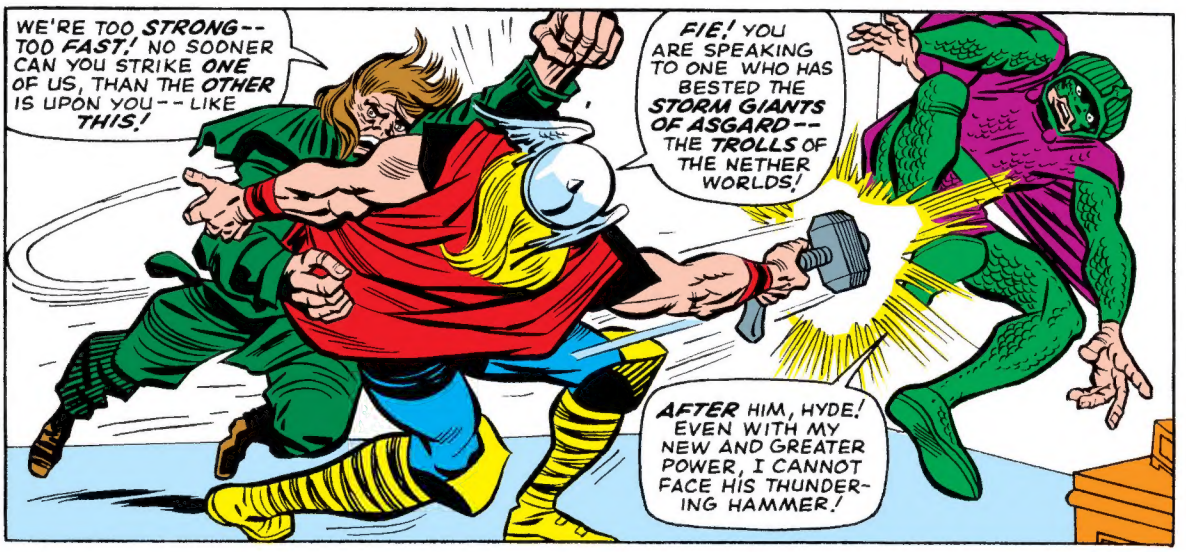
111 DEC

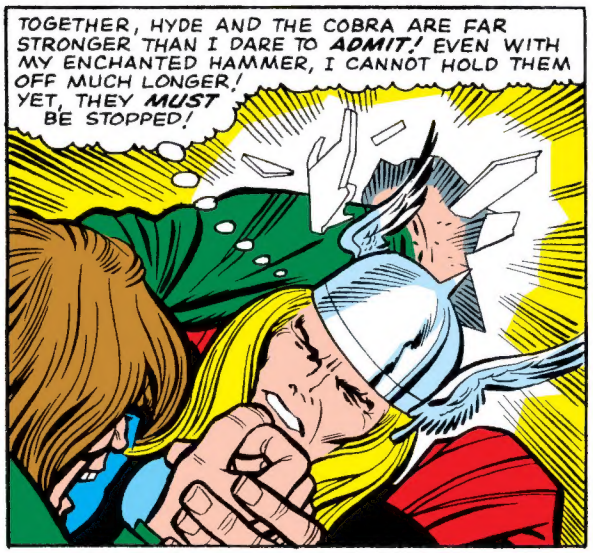
MARVEL COMICS GROUP

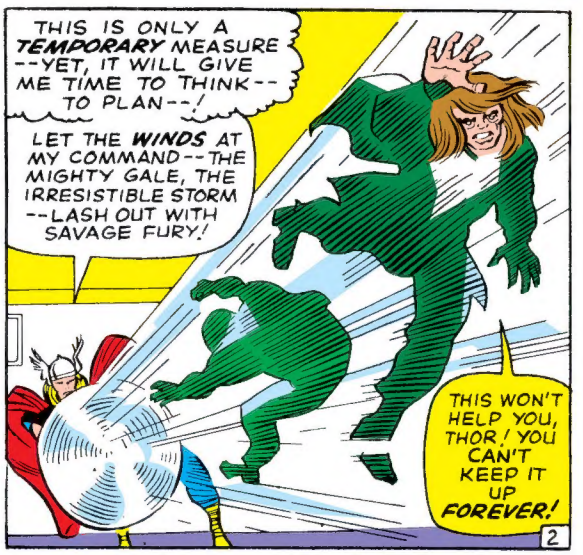
WE DECIDED THAT THIS COVER IS TOO BEAUTIFUL TO SPOIL WITH CAPTIONS...SO HERE IT IS... YOU FIGURE IT OUT!

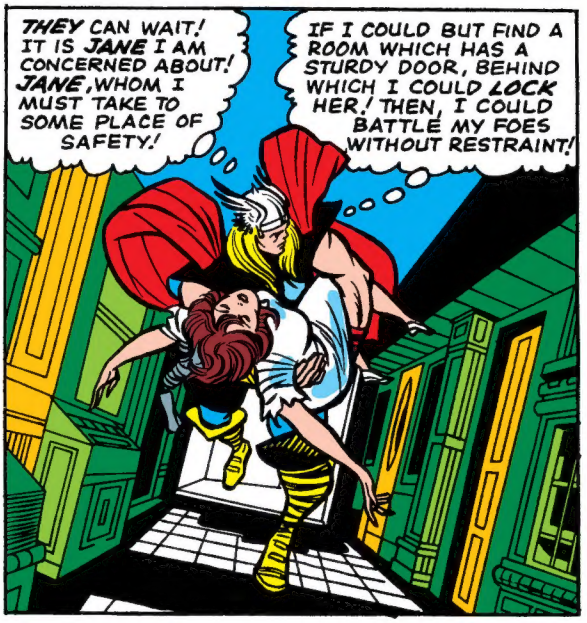

THE MIGHTY THOR
THE MYSTERIOUS Mr. HYDE and THE SERPENTINE COBRA FEEL... "THE POWER OF THE THUNDER GOD!"
WE FIND IT HARD TO BELIEVE THAT ANYONE WOULD EVER KNOWINGLY MISS AN ISSUE OF THOR! BUT, FOR THE FEW UNFORTUNATES WHO MIGHT NOT HAVE SEEN OUR PREVIOUS MEMORABLE TALE, WE'LL EXPLAIN THAT THOR HAS BEEN LURED TO A SPECIALLY-PREPARED "HOUSE OF TRAPS" BY MR. HYDE AND THE COBRA! FINDING HIS BELOVED JANE DYING, THOR SAVES HER TEMPORARILY BY CAUSING TIME TO STAND STILL WITHIN THE GLOOMY HOUSE, AND THEN...
LOOK! IT'S THOR! HE STILL LIVES!
BUT NOT FOR LONG, HYDE! NOT SINCE LOKI MADE US AS POWERFUL AS HE!
HYDE! COBRA! BY ASGARD, YOU SHALL PAY FOR THIS!
WRITTEN WITH THE MASTERY OF STAN LEE
ILLUSTRATED WITH THE GENIUS OF JACK KIRBY
DELINEATED WITH THE DELICACY OF CHIC STONE
LETTERED WITH THE INDIA INK OF ARTIE SIMEK
ONE OF THE PROUDEST CREATIONS OF MIGHTY MARVEL'S TEAM OF TALENTED TITANS! AN ADVENTURE DRENCHED WITH GLORY!
1

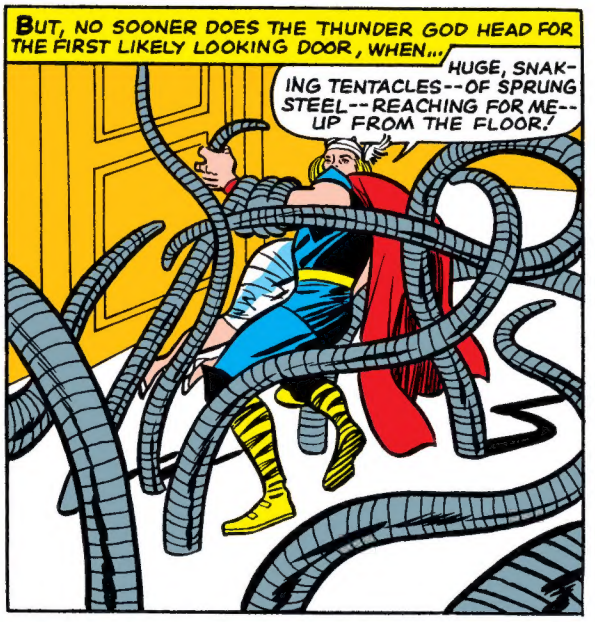

IN TRUTH, YOU ARE FAR STRONGER THAN I REMEMBER YOU! BUT IT SHALL AVAIL YOU NOTHING,! NO POWER ON EARTH CAN EQUAL THAT OF THOR'S!
NOT ALONE PERHAPS, BUT WORKING TOGETHER, THE COBRA AND I CAN DESTROY YOU!

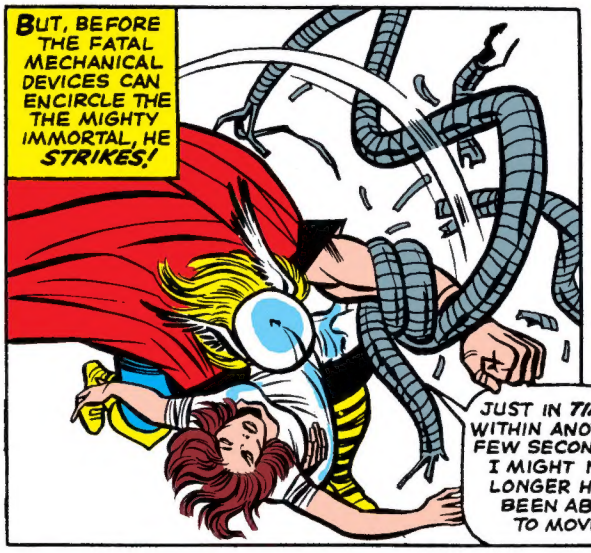

WE'RE TOO STRONG-- TOO FAST,! NO SOONER CAN YOU STRIKE ONE OF US, THAN THE OTHER IS UPON YOU-- LIKE THIS!
FIE! YOU ARE SPEAKING TO ONE WHO HAS BESTED THE STORM GIANTS OF ASGARD-- THE TROLLS OF THE NETHER WORLDS!
AFTER HIM, HYDE! EVEN WITH MY NEW AND GREATER POWER, I CANNOT FACE HIS THUNDERING HAMMER!

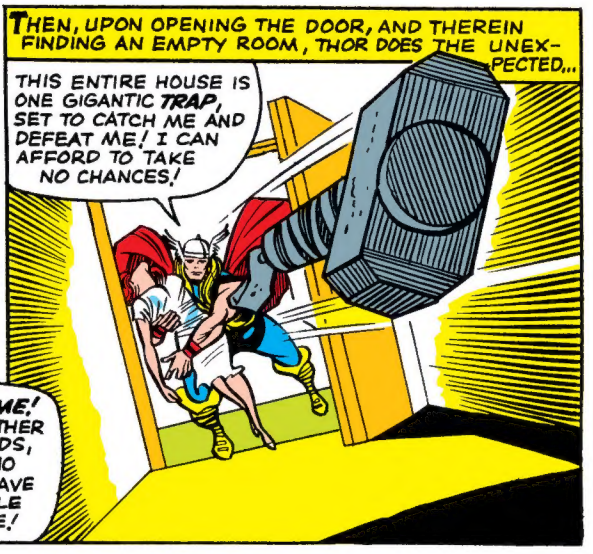

TOGETHER, HYDE AND THE COBRA ARE FAR STRONGER THAN I DARE TO ADMIT,! EVEN WITH MY ENCHANTED HAMMER, I CANNOT HOLD THEM OFF MUCH LONGER! YET, THEY MUST BE STOPPED!

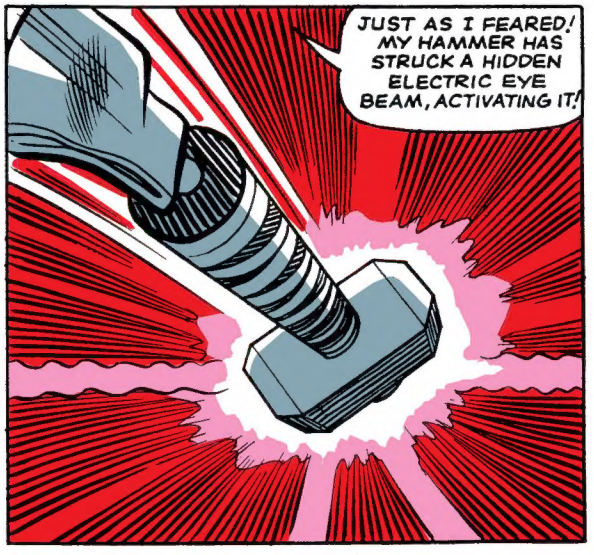

THIS IS ONLY A TEMPORARY MEASURE --YET, IT WILL GIVE ME TIME TO THINK-- TO PLAN--!
LET THE WINDS AT MY COMMAND--THE MIGHTY GALE, THE IRRESISTIBLE STORM --LASH OUT WITH SAVAGE FURY!
THIS WON'T HELP YOU, THOR! YOU CAN'T KEEP IT UP FOREVER!
2

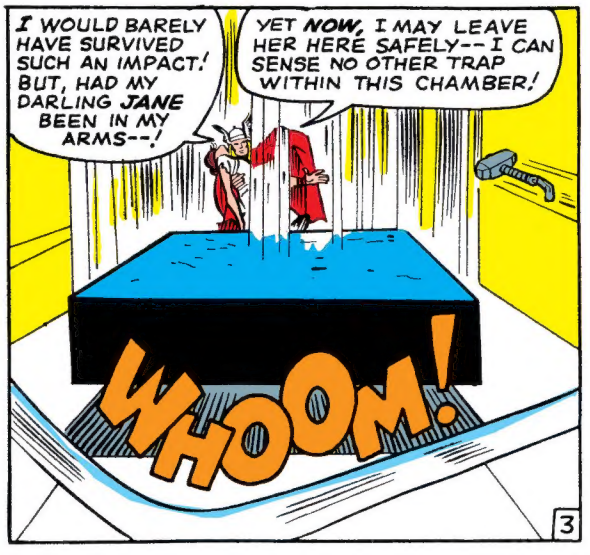

THEY CAN WAIT! IT IS JANE I AM CONCERNED ABOUT! JANE, WHOM I MUST TAKE TO SOME PLACE OF SAFETY!
IF I COULD BUT FIND A ROOM WHICH HAS A STURDY DOOR, BEHIND WHICH I COULD LOCK HER! THEN, I COULD BATTLE MY FOES WITHOUT RESTRAINT!

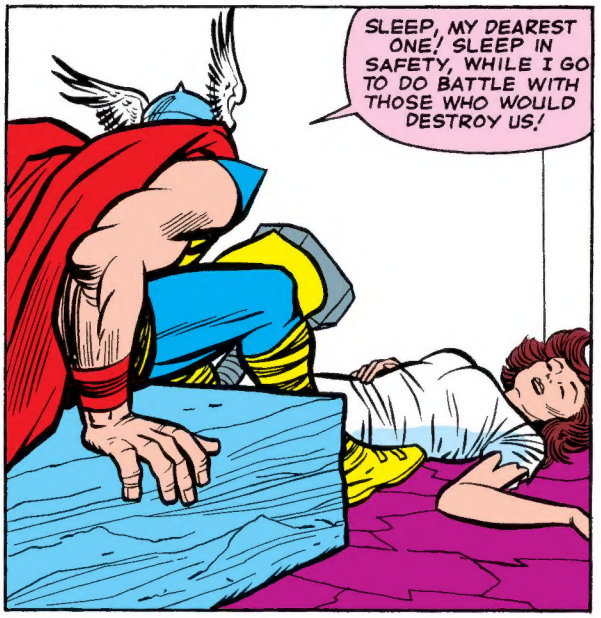

BUT, NO SOONER DOES THE THUNDER GOD HEAD FOR THE FIRST LIKELY LOOKING DOOR, WHEN...
HUGE, SNAKING TENTACLES--OF SPRUNG STEEL--REACHING FOR ME--UP FROM THE FLOOR!


BUT, BEFORE THE FATAL MECHANICAL DEVICES CAN ENCIRCLE THE THE MIGHTY IMMORTAL, HE STRIKES!
JUST IN TIME! WITHIN ANOTHER FEW SECONDS, I MIGHT NO LONGER HAVE BEEN ABLE TO MOVE!

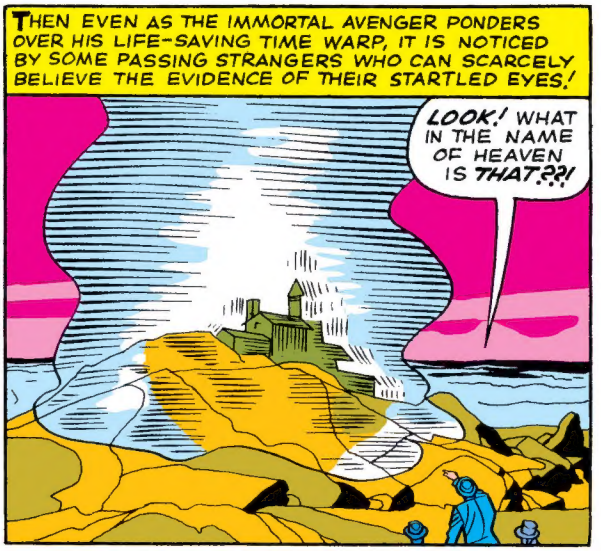

THEN, UPON OPENING THE DOOR, AND THEREIN FINDING AN EMPTY ROOM, THOR DOES THE UNEXPECTED...
THIS ENTIRE HOUSE IS ONE GIGANTIC TRAP, SET TO CATCH ME AND DEFEAT ME! I CAN AFFORD TO TAKE NO CHANCES!

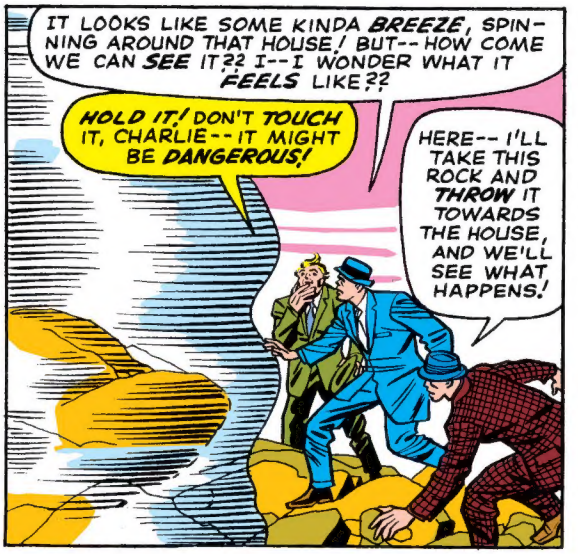

JUST AS I FEARED! MY HAMMER HAS STRUCK A HIDDEN ELECTRIC EYE BEAM, ACTIVATING IT!

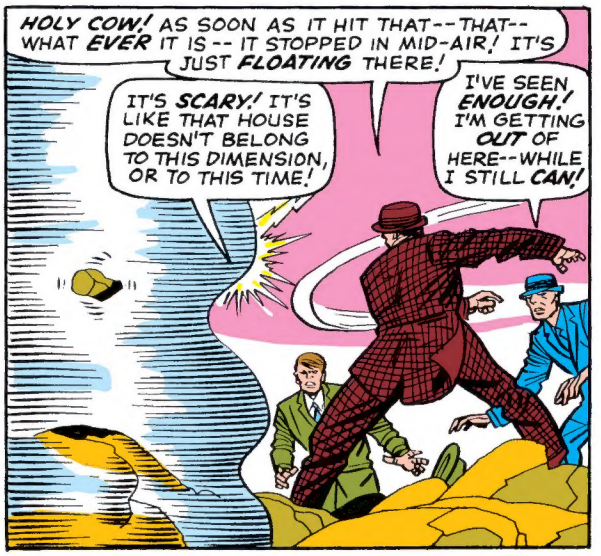

I WOULD BARELY HAVE SURVIVED SUCH AN IMPACT! BUT, HAD MY DARLING JANE BEEN IN MY ARMS--!
YET NOW, I MAY LEAVE HER HERE SAFELY--I CAN SENSE NO OTHER TRAP WITHIN THIS CHAMBER!
WHOOM!

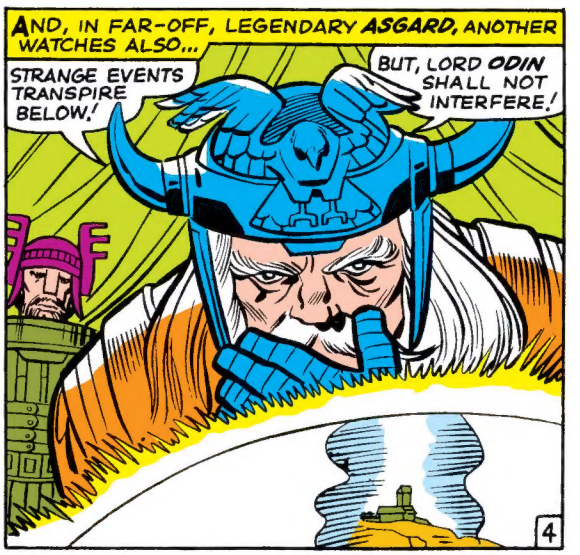

SLEEP, MY DEAREST ONE! SLEEP IN SAFETY, WHILE I GO TO DO BATTLE WITH THOSE WHO WOULD DESTROY US!

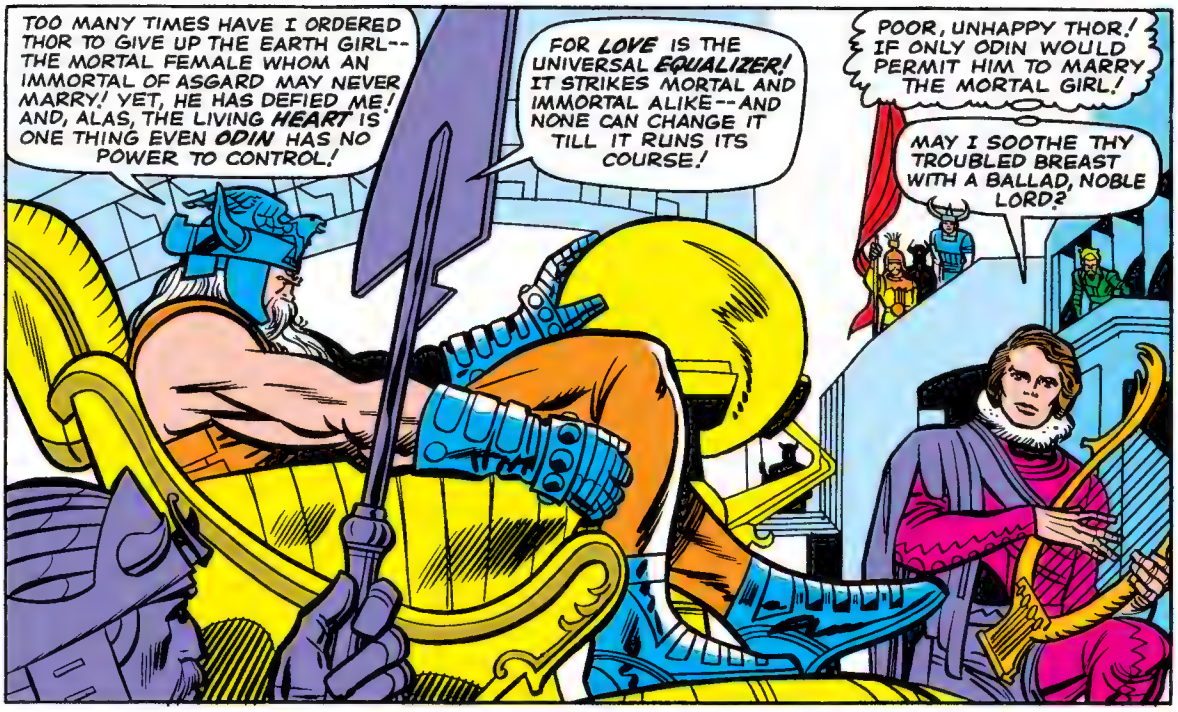
BUT, EVEN IF I DEFEAT HYDE AND THE COBRA, WHAT OF JANE? SHE IS BUT SECONDS AWAY FROM DEATH--AND I CANNOT CAUSE TIME TO STAND STILL IN THIS HOUSE FOREVER!


THEN EVEN AS THE IMMORTAL AVENGER PONDERS OVER HIS LIFE-SAVING TIME WARP, IT IS NOTICED BY SOME PASSING STRANGERS WHO CAN SCARCELY BELIEVE THE EVIDENCE OF THEIR STARTLED EYES!
LOOK! WHAT IN THE NAME OF HEAVEN IS THAT?!?!

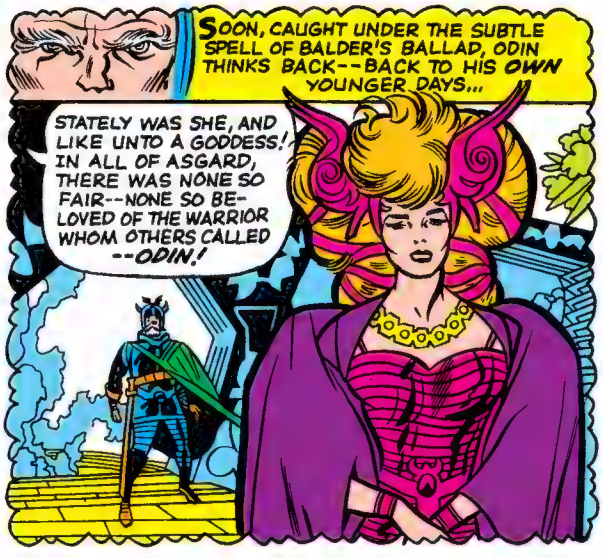

IT LOOKS LIKE SOME KINDA BREEZE, SPINNING AROUND THAT HOUSE! BUT--HOW COME WE CAN SEE IT?? I--I WONDER WHAT IT FEELS LIKE??
HOLD IT! DON'T TOUCH IT, CHARLIE--IT MIGHT BE DANGEROUS!
HERE--I'LL TAKE THIS ROCK AND THROW IT TOWARDS THE HOUSE, AND WE'LL SEE WHAT HAPPENS!

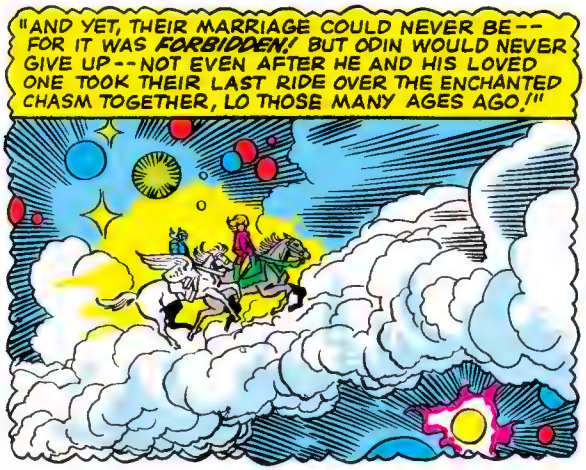

HOLY COW! AS SOON AS IT HIT THAT--THAT--WHAT EVER IT IS--IT STOPPED IN MID-AIR! IT'S JUST FLOATING THERE!
IT'S SCARY! IT'S LIKE THAT HOUSE DOESN'T BELONG TO THIS DIMENSION, OR TO THIS TIME!
I'VE SEEN ENOUGH! I'M GETTING OUT OF HERE--WHILE I STILL CAN!

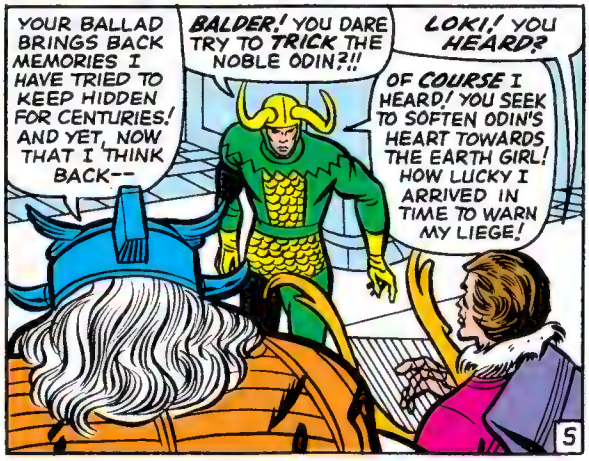

AND, IN FAR-OFF, LEGENDARY ASGARD, ANOTHER WATCHES ALSO...
STRANGE EVENTS TRANSPIRE BELOW!
BUT, LORD ODIN SHALL NOT INTERFERE!
4

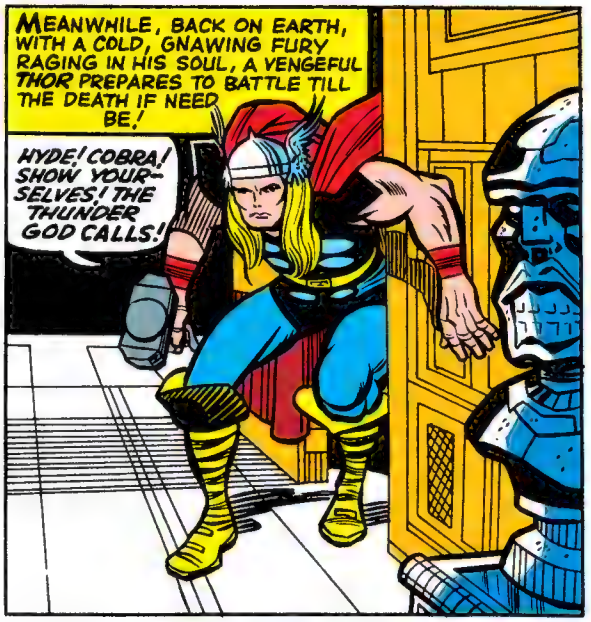

TOO MANY TIMES HAVE I ORDERED THOR TO GIVE UP THE EARTH GIRL--THE MORTAL FEMALE WHOM AN IMMORTAL OF ASGARD MAY NEVER MARRY! YET, HE HAS DEFIED ME! AND, ALAS, THE LIVING HEART IS ONE THING EVEN ODIN HAS NO POWER TO CONTROL!
FOR LOVE IS THE UNIVERSAL EQUALIZER! IT STRIKES MORTAL AND IMMORTAL ALIKE--AND NONE CAN CHANGE IT TILL IT RUNS ITS COURSE!
POOR, UNHAPPY THOR! IF ONLY ODIN WOULD PERMIT HIM TO MARRY THE MORTAL GIRL!
MAY I SOOTHE THY TROUBLED BREAST WITH A BALLAD, NOBLE LORD?

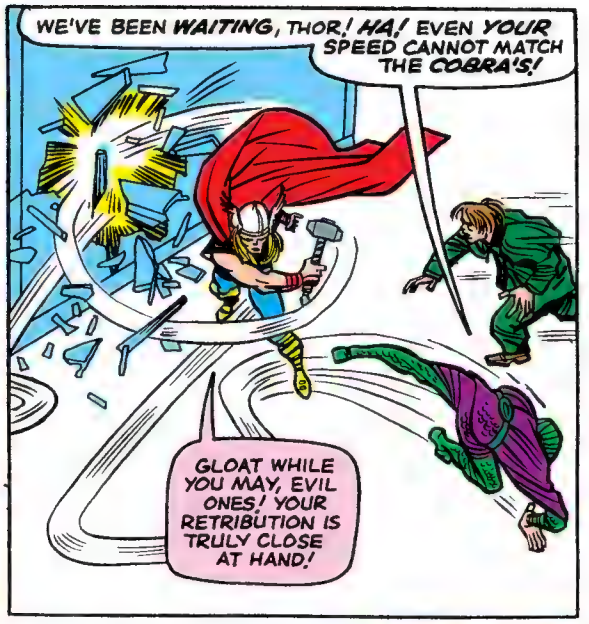
IF IT PLEASE THEE, BRAVE BALDER--FOR IN TRUTH I AM SORELY VEXED!
I SING OF ANCIENT TIMES, AND OF THE LOVE OF A WARRIOR FOR A MAIDEN FAIR...

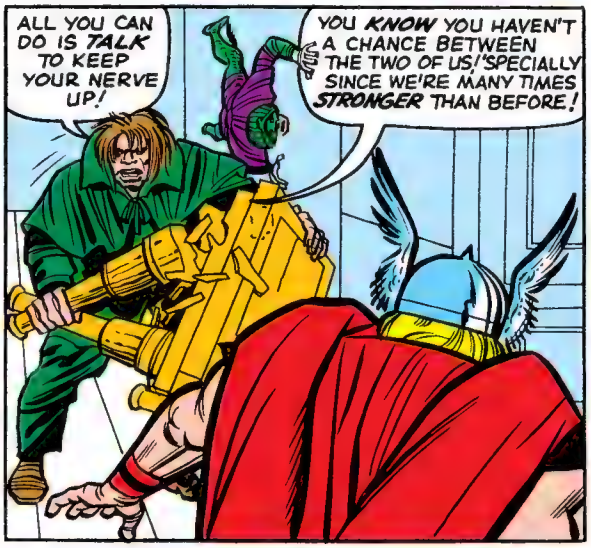

SOON, CAUGHT UNDER THE SUBTLE SPELL OF BALDER'S BALLAD, ODIN THINKS BACK--BACK TO HIS OWN YOUNGER DAYS...
STATELY WAS SHE, AND LIKE UNTO A GODDESS! IN ALL OF ASGARD, THERE WAS NONE SO FAIR--NONE SO BE-LOVED OF THE WARRIOR WHOM OTHERS CALLED --ODIN!

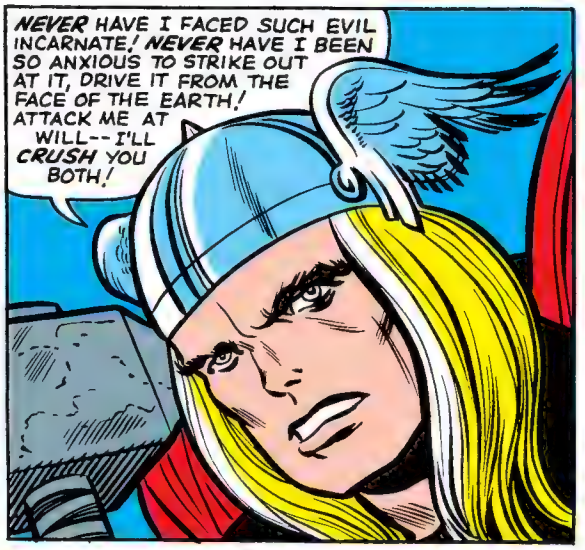

"AND YET, THEIR MARRIAGE COULD NEVER BE--FOR IT WAS FORBIDDEN! BUT ODIN WOULD NEVER GIVE UP--NOT EVEN AFTER HE AND HIS LOVED ONE TOOK THEIR LAST RIDE OVER THE ENCHANTED CHASM TOGETHER, LO THOSE MANY AGES AGO!"

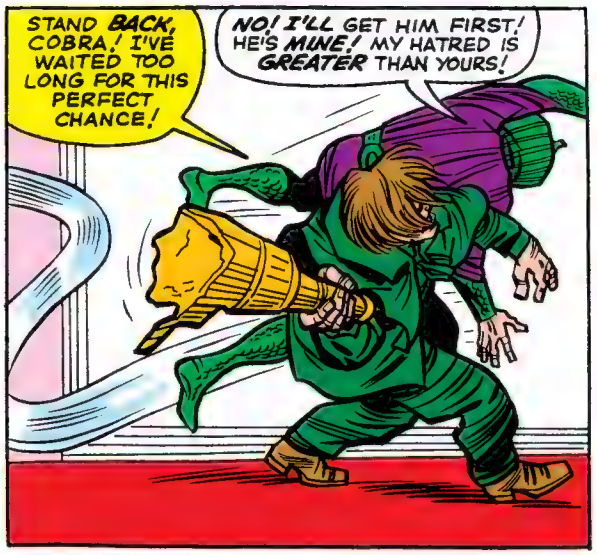

YOUR BALLAD BRINGS BACK MEMORIES I HAVE TRIED TO KEEP HIDDEN FOR CENTURIES! AND YET, NOW THAT I THINK BACK--
BALDER! YOU DARE TRY TO TRICK THE NOBLE ODIN?!!
LOKI! YOU HEARD?
OF COURSE I HEARD! YOU SEEK TO SOFTEN ODIN'S HEART TOWARDS THE EARTH GIRL! HOW LUCKY I ARRIVED IN TIME TO WARN MY LIEGE!

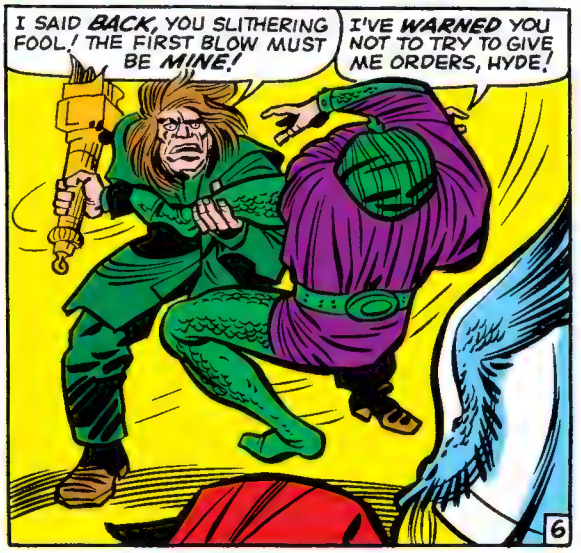

MEANWHILE, BACK ON EARTH, WITH A COLD, GNAWING FURY RAGING IN HIS SOUL, A VENGEFUL THOR PREPARES TO BATTLE TILL THE DEATH IF NEED BE!
HYDE! COBRA! SHOW YOURSELVES! THE THUNDER GOD CALLS!

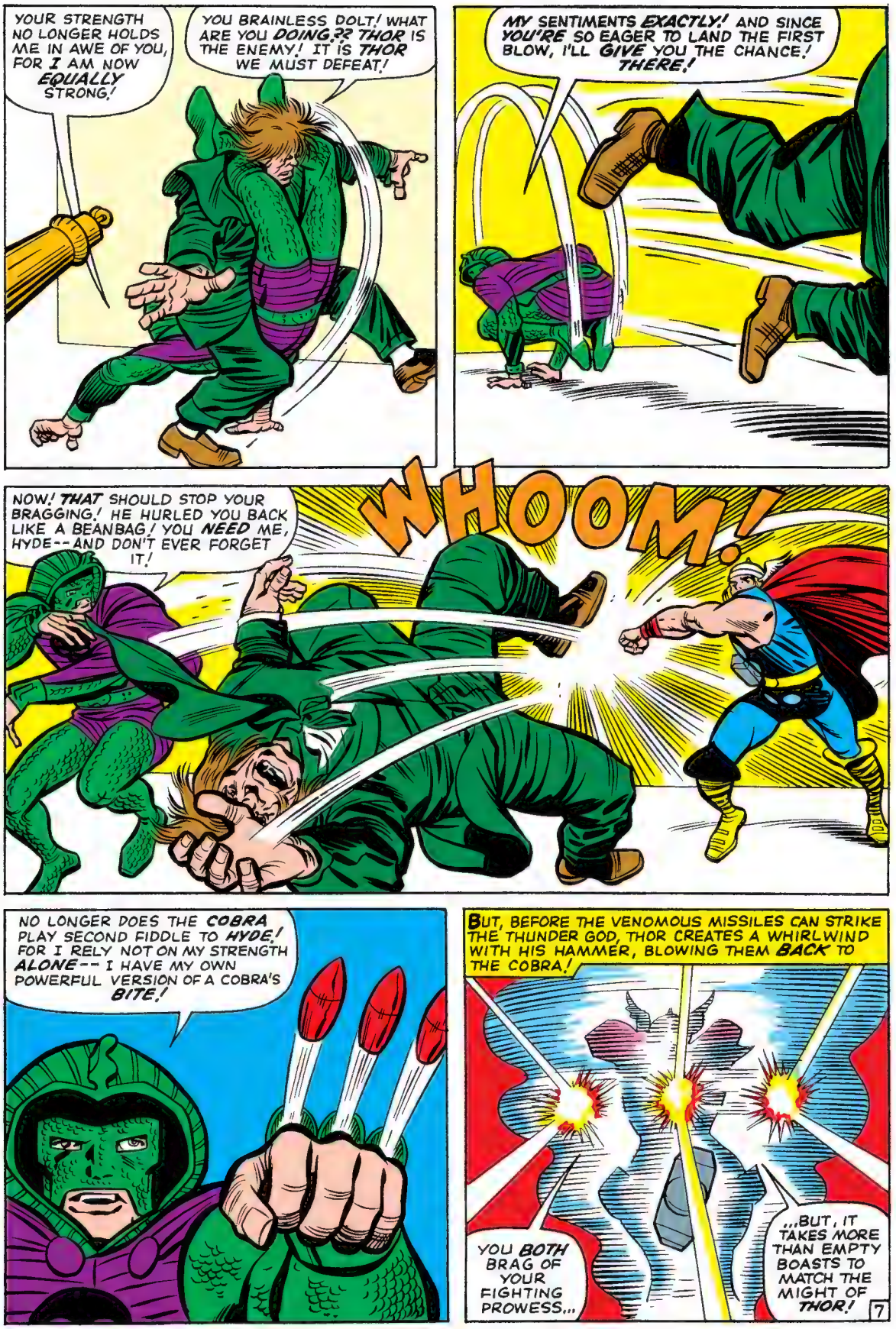

WE'VE BEEN WAITING, THOR! HA! EVEN YOUR SPEED CANNOT MATCH THE COBRA'S!
GLOAT WHILE YOU MAY, EVIL ONES! YOUR RETRIBUTION IS TRULY CLOSE AT HAND!

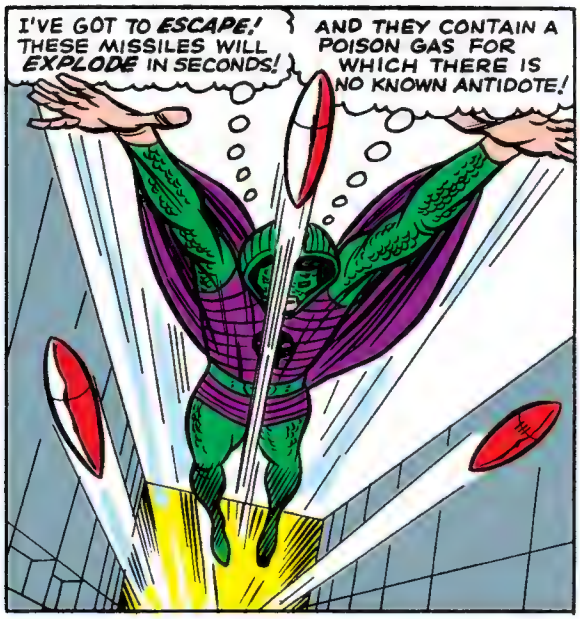

ALL YOU CAN DO IS TALK TO KEEP YOUR NERVE UP!
YOU KNOW YOU HAVEN'T A CHANCE BETWEEN THE TWO OF US, 'SPECIALLY SINCE WE'RE MANY TIMES STRONGER THAN BEFORE!

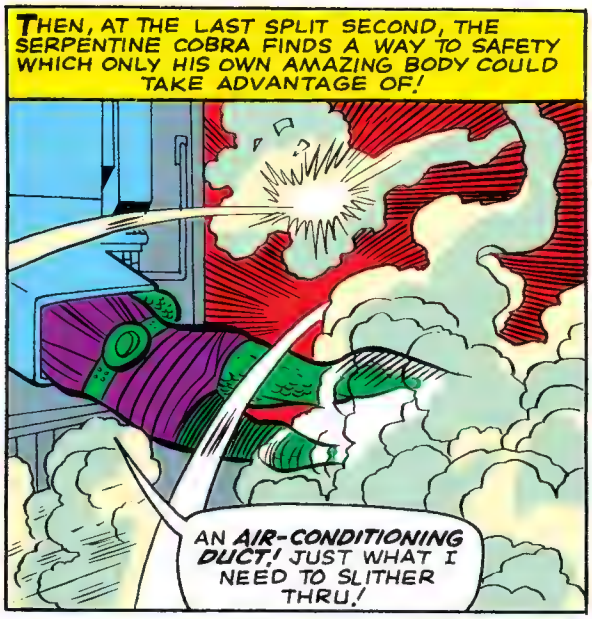

NEVER HAVE I FACED SUCH EVIL INCARNATE! NEVER HAVE I BEEN SO ANXIOUS TO STRIKE OUT AT IT, DRIVE IT FROM THE FACE OF THE EARTH! ATTACK ME AT WILL-- I'LL CRUSH YOU BOTH!

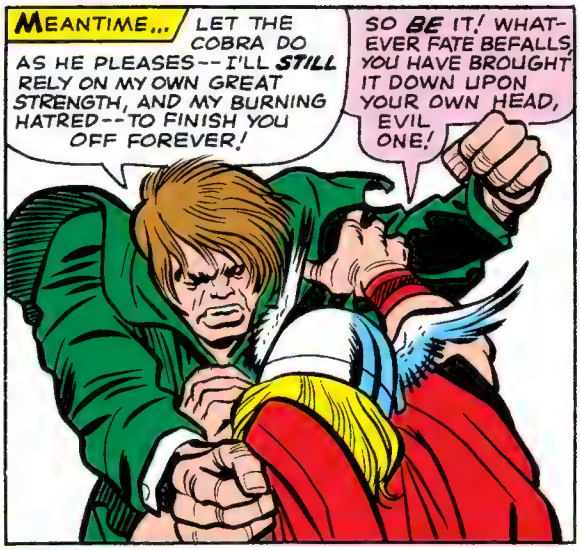

STAND BACK, COBRA! I'VE WAITED TOO LONG FOR THIS PERFECT CHANCE!
NO! I'LL GET HIM FIRST! HE'S MINE! MY HATRED IS GREATER THAN YOURS!

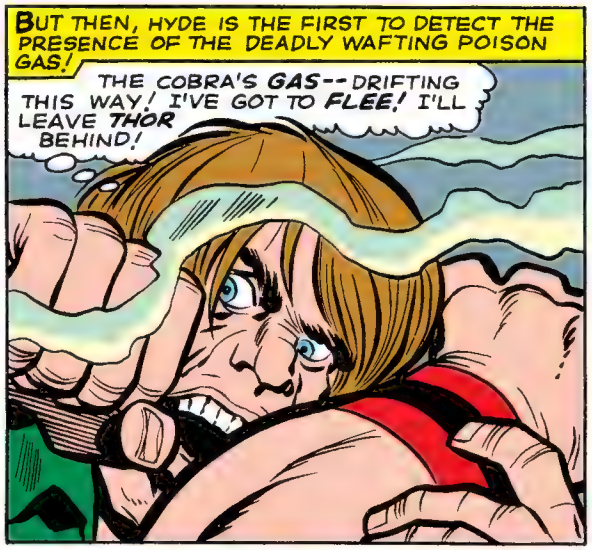

I SAID BACK, YOU SLITHERING FOOL! THE FIRST BLOW MUST BE MINE!
I'VE WARNED YOU NOT TO TRY TO GIVE ME ORDERS, HYDE!

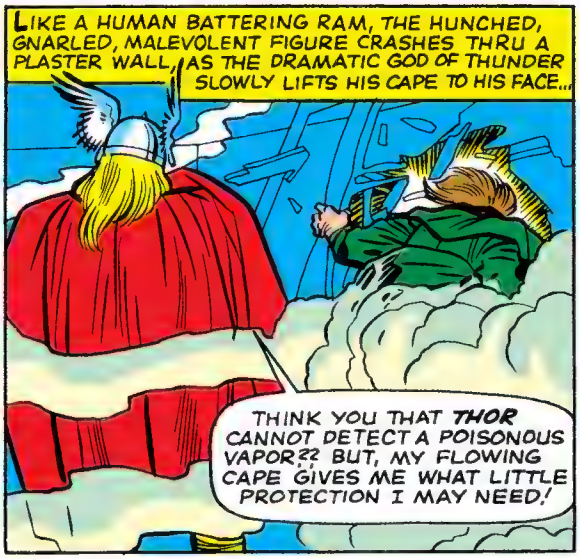

YOUR STRENGTH NO LONGER HOLDS ME IN AWE OF YOU, FOR I AM NOW EQUALLY STRONG!
YOU BRAINLESS DOLT! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?? THOR IS THE ENEMY! IT IS THOR WE MUST DEFEAT!
MY SENTIMENTS EXACTLY! AND SINCE YOU'RE SO EAGER TO LAND THE FIRST BLOW, I'LL GIVE YOU THE CHANCE! THERE!
NOW! THAT SHOULD STOP YOUR BRAGGING! HE HURLED YOU BACK LIKE A BEANBAG! YOU NEED ME, HYDE--AND DON'T EVER FORGET IT!
WHOOM!
NO LONGER DOES THE COBRA PLAY SECOND FIDDLE TO HYDE! FOR I RELY NOT ON MY STRENGTH ALONE--I HAVE MY OWN POWERFUL VERSION OF A COBRA'S BITE!
BUT, BEFORE THE VENOMOUS MISSILES CAN STRIKE THE THUNDER GOD, THOR CREATES A WHIRLWIND WITH HIS HAMMER, BLOWING THEM BACK TO THE COBRA!
YOU BOTH BRAG OF YOUR FIGHTING PROWESS...
...BUT, IT TAKES MORE THAN EMPTY BOASTS TO MATCH THE MIGHT OF THOR!
7

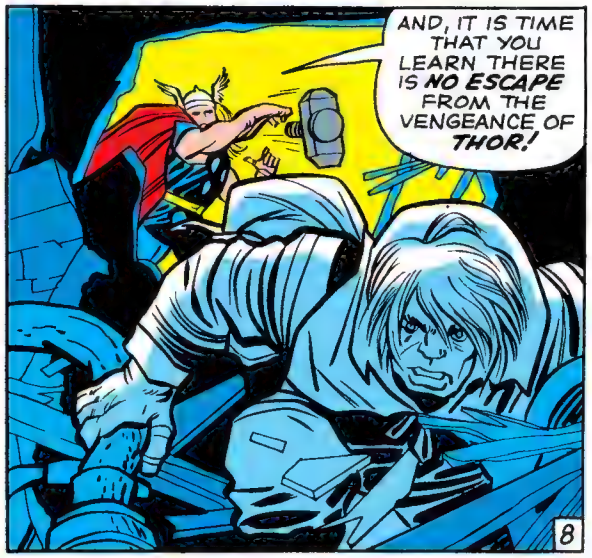

I'VE GOT TO ESCAPE! THESE MISSILES WILL EXPLODE IN SECONDS!
AND THEY CONTAIN A POISON GAS FOR WHICH THERE IS NO KNOWN ANTIDOTE!


THEN, AT THE LAST SPLIT SECOND, THE SERPENTINE COBRA FINDS A WAY TO SAFETY WHICH ONLY HIS OWN AMAZING BODY COULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF!
AN AIR-CONDITIONING DUCT! JUST WHAT I NEED TO SLITHER THRU!


MEANTIME... LET THE COBRA DO AS HE PLEASES--I'LL STILL RELY ON MY OWN GREAT STRENGTH, AND MY BURNING HATRED--TO FINISH YOU OFF FOREVER!
SO BE IT! WHATEVER FATE BEFALLS, YOU HAVE BROUGHT IT DOWN UPON YOUR OWN HEAD, EVIL ONE!

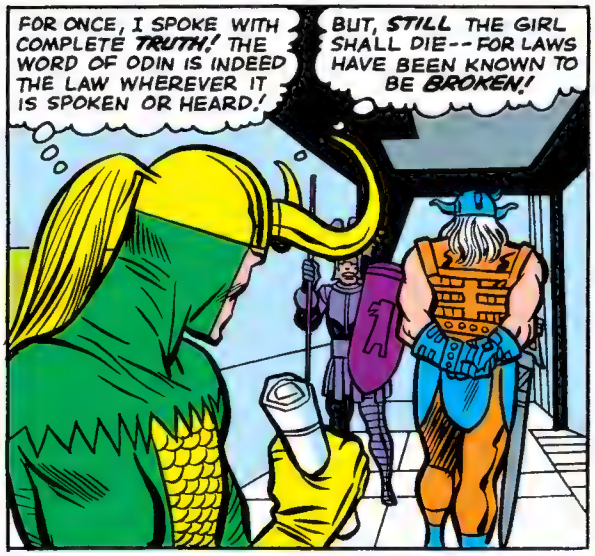

BUT THEN, HYDE IS THE FIRST TO DETECT THE PRESENCE OF THE DEADLY WAFTING POISON GAS!
THE COBRA'S GAS--DRIFTING THIS WAY! I'VE GOT TO FLEE! I'LL LEAVE THOR BEHIND!


LIKE A HUMAN BATTERING RAM, THE HUNCHED, GNARLED, MALEVOLENT FIGURE CRASHES THRU A PLASTER WALL, AS THE DRAMATIC GOD OF THUNDER SLOWLY LIFTS HIS CAPE TO HIS FACE...
THINK YOU THAT THOR CANNOT DETECT A POISONOUS VAPOR?? BUT, MY FLOWING CAPE GIVES ME WHAT LITTLE PROTECTION I MAY NEED!

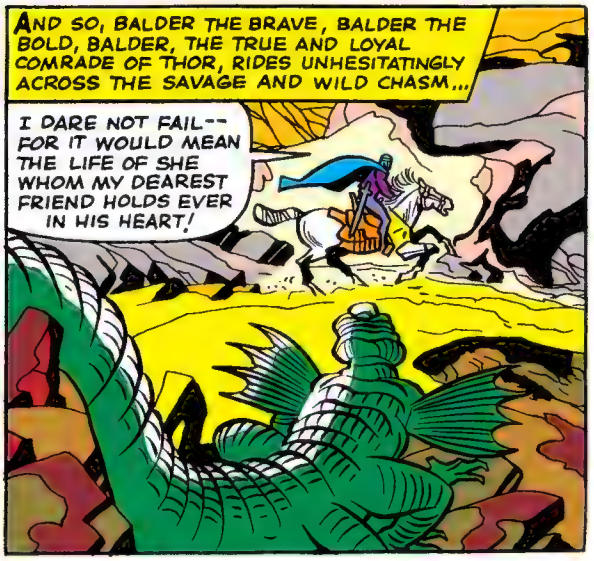

AND, IT IS TIME THAT YOU LEARN THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM THE VENGEANCE OF THOR!

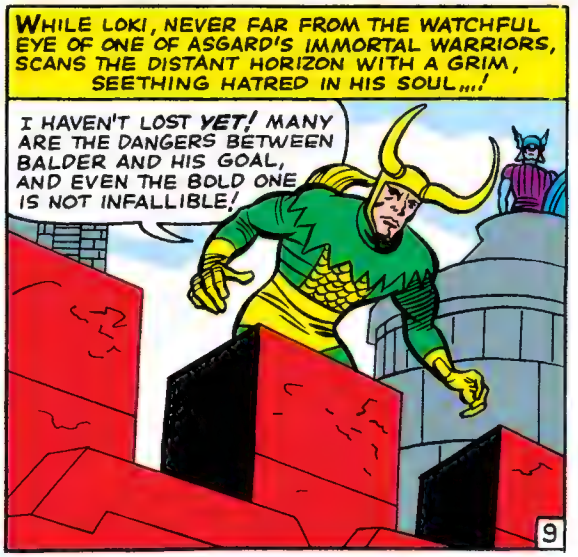
MEANWHILE, IN ASGARD, LORDLY ODIN FINALLY REACHES A MOMENTOUS DECISION...
ALTHOUGH THOR MAY NOT TAKE THE EARTH GIRL FOR HIS BRIDE, STILL I SHALL TRY TO SAVE HER FROM DEATH--BECAUSE OF MY LOVE FOR MY WARRIOR SON!
BY ALL THE PLANETS, THIS IS A DISAPPOINT-MENT TO ME!

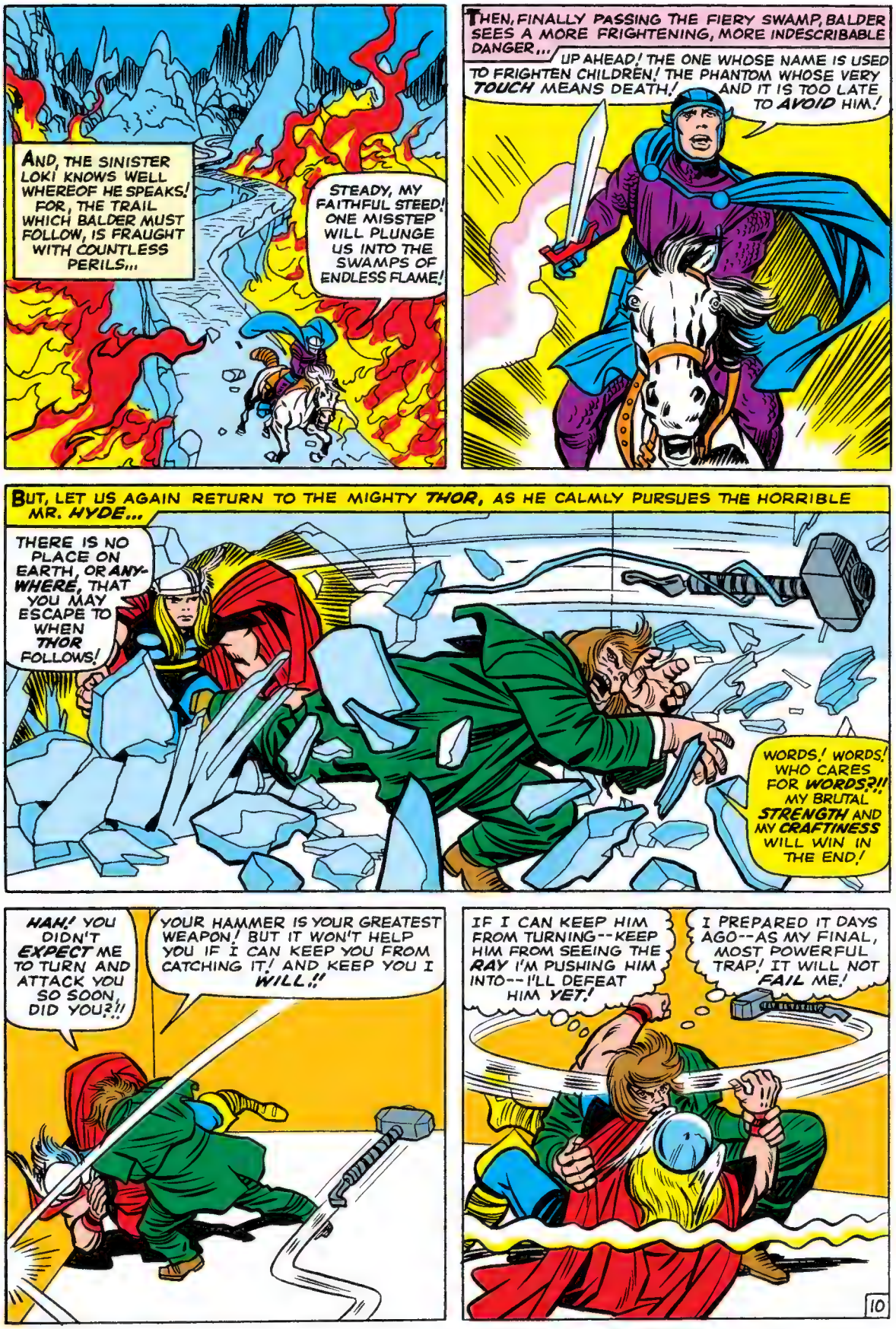
LOKI! BY MY IMPERIAL COMMAND, YOU ARE ORDERED TO DELIVER THIS MESSAGE TO HARDOL, THE MYSTIC HEALER WHO LIVES BEYOND THE MOLTEN CHASM! HE WILL FIND A REMEDY FOR THE ONE CALLED JANE!
THE WORD OF ODIN IS THE LAW SUPREME! I SHALL OBEY AT ONCE, NOBLE ONE!

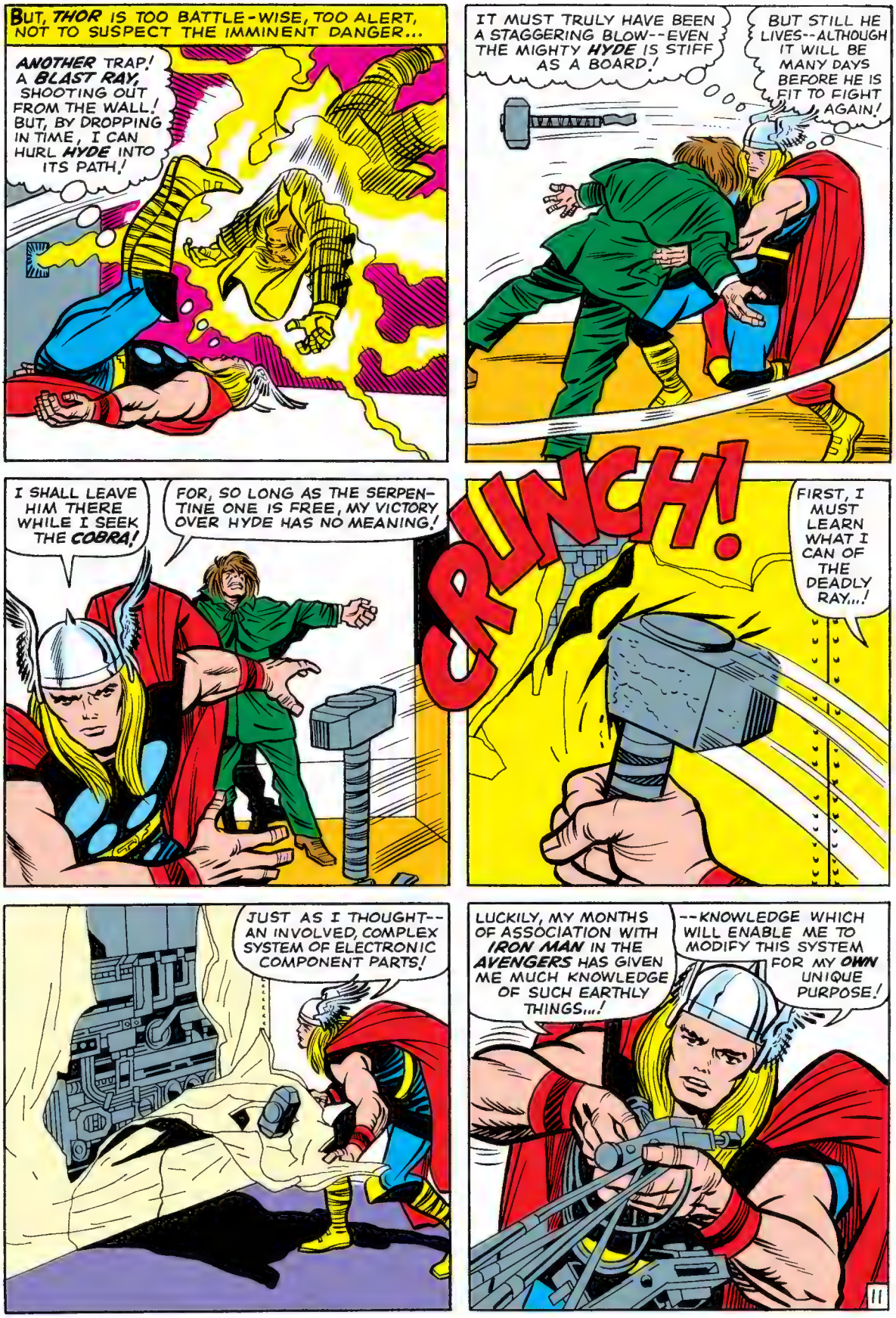

FOR ONCE, I SPOKE WITH COMPLETE TRUTH! THE WORD OF ODIN IS INDEED THE LAW WHEREVER IT IS SPOKEN OR HEARD!
BUT, STILL THE GIRL SHALL DIE--FOR LAWS HAVE BEEN KNOWN TO BE BROKEN!

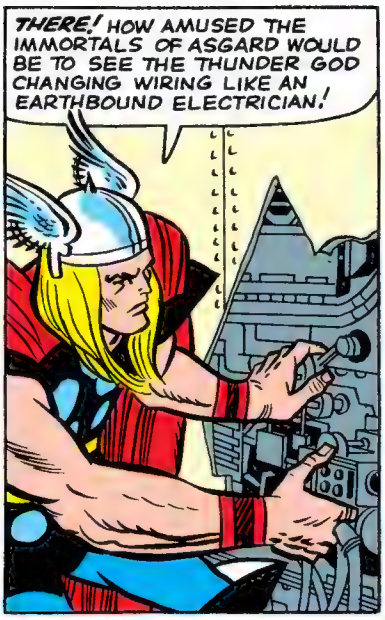
BUT, NO SOONER DOES THOR'S AGELESS ARCH-ENEMY TURN ABOUT, THEN HE SEES...
I'LL DELIVER THAT MESSAGE, CRAFTY ONE!
WE KNOW THEE TOO WELL TO HAVE IT OTHERWISE!
MEANTIME, YOU SHALL STAY WITH US!
CAN IT BE?? MY OWN PEERS TURNING AGAINST ME!
NOT SO, LOKI! WE ARE NOT THY PEERS! FOR NONE CAN MATCH THEE IN VILLAINY, OR IN DECEIT!


AND SO, BALDER THE BRAVE, BALDER THE BOLD, BALDER, THE TRUE AND LOYAL COMRADE OF THOR, RIDES UNHESITATINGLY ACROSS THE SAVAGE AND WILD CHASM...
I DARE NOT FAIL--FOR IT WOULD MEAN THE LIFE OF SHE WHOM MY DEAREST FRIEND HOLDS EVER IN HIS HEART!

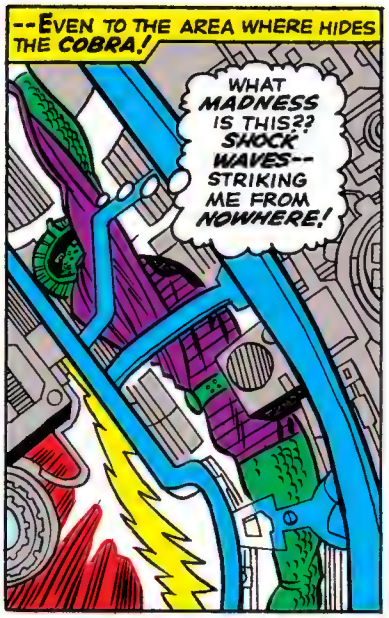

WHILE LOKI, NEVER FAR FROM THE WATCHFUL EYE OF ONE OF ASGARD'S IMMORTAL WARRIORS, SCANS THE DISTANT HORIZON WITH A GRIM, SEETHING HATRED IN HIS SOUL...!
I HAVEN'T LOST YET! MANY ARE THE DANGERS BETWEEN BALDER AND HIS GOAL, AND EVEN THE BOLD ONE IS NOT INFALLIBLE!

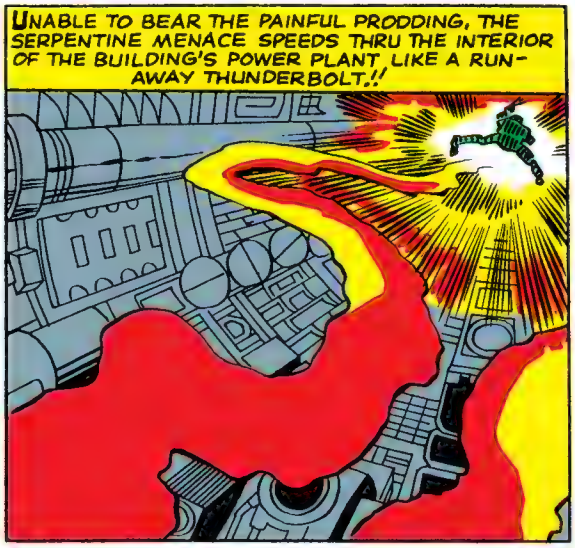

AND, THE SINISTER LOKI KNOWS WELL WHEREOF HE SPEAKS! FOR, THE TRAIL WHICH BALDER MUST FOLLOW, IS FRAUGHT WITH COUNTLESS PERILS...
STEADY, MY FAITHFUL STEED! ONE MISSTEP WILL PLUNGE US INTO THE SWAMPS OF ENDLESS FLAME!
THEN, FINALLY PASSING THE FIERY SWAMP, BALDER SEES A MORE FRIGHTENING, MORE INDESCRIBABLE DANGER...
UP AHEAD! THE ONE WHOSE NAME IS USED TO FRIGHTEN CHILDREN! THE PHANTOM WHOSE VERY TOUCH MEANS DEATH!
AND IT IS TOO LATE TO AVOID HIM!
BUT, LET US AGAIN RETURN TO THE MIGHTY THOR, AS HE CALMLY PURSUES THE HORRIBLE MR. HYDE...
THERE IS NO PLACE ON EARTH, OR ANYWHERE, THAT YOU MAY ESCAPE TO WHEN THOR FOLLOWS!
WORDS! WORDS! WHO CARES FOR WORDS?!! MY BRUTAL STRENGTH AND MY CRAFTINESS WILL WIN IN THE END!
HAH! YOU DIDN'T EXPECT ME TO TURN AND ATTACK YOU SO SOON, DID YOU?!!
YOUR HAMMER IS YOUR GREATEST WEAPON! BUT IT WON'T HELP YOU IF I CAN KEEP YOU FROM CATCHING IT! AND KEEP YOU I WILL!!
IF I CAN KEEP HIM FROM TURNING--KEEP HIM FROM SEEING THE RAY I'M PUSHING HIM INTO--I'LL DEFEAT HIM YET!
I PREPARED IT DAYS AGO--AS MY FINAL, MOST POWERFUL TRAP! IT WILL NOT FAIL ME!
10

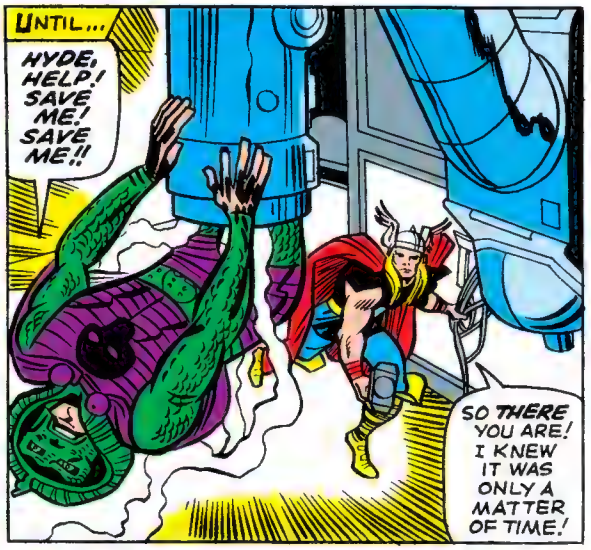

BUT, THOR IS TOO BATTLE-WISE, TOO ALERT, NOT TO SUSPECT THE IMMINENT DANGER...
ANOTHER TRAP! A BLAST RAY, SHOOTING OUT FROM THE WALL! BUT, BY DROPPING IN TIME, I CAN HURL HYDE INTO ITS PATH!
IT MUST TRULY HAVE BEEN A STAGGERING BLOW--EVEN THE MIGHTY HYDE IS STIFF AS A BOARD!
BUT STILL HE LIVES--ALTHOUGH IT WILL BE MANY DAYS BEFORE HE IS FIT TO FIGHT AGAIN!
I SHALL LEAVE HIM THERE WHILE I SEEK THE COBRA!
FOR, SO LONG AS THE SERPENTINE ONE IS FREE, MY VICTORY OVER HYDE HAS NO MEANING!
CRUNCH!
FIRST, I MUST LEARN WHAT I CAN OF THE DEADLY RAY...!
JUST AS I THOUGHT--AN INVOLVED, COMPLEX SYSTEM OF ELECTRONIC COMPONENT PARTS!
LUCKILY, MY MONTHS OF ASSOCIATION WITH IRON MAN IN THE AVENGERS HAS GIVEN ME MUCH KNOWLEDGE OF SUCH EARTHLY THINGS...!
--KNOWLEDGE WHICH WILL ENABLE ME TO MODIFY THIS SYSTEM FOR MY OWN UNIQUE PURPOSE!

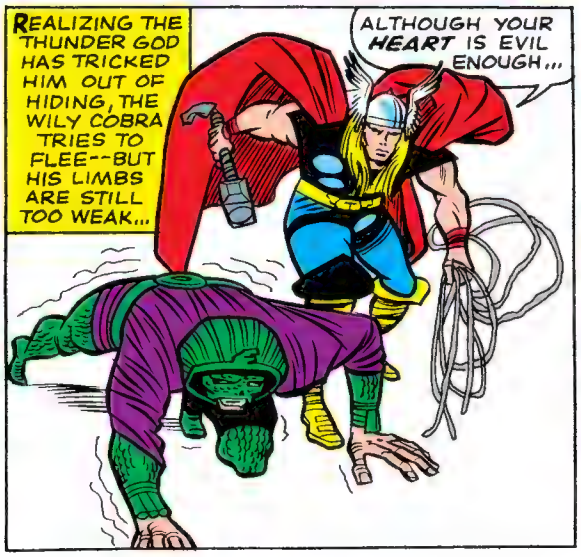

THERE! HOW AMUSED THE IMMORTALS OF ASGARD WOULD BE TO SEE THE THUNDER GOD CHANGING WIRING LIKE AN EARTHBOUND ELECTRICIAN!

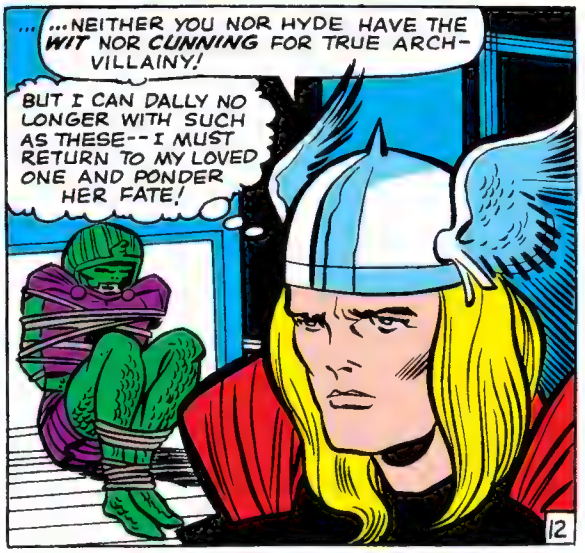
MINUTES LATER, A HIGH-TENSION SUPERCHARGED ELECTRICAL EFFECT COURSES THRU THE ENTIRE HOUSE, SENDING TINGLY WAVES OF ELECTRIC ENERGY THRU EVERY NOOK AND CRANNY...

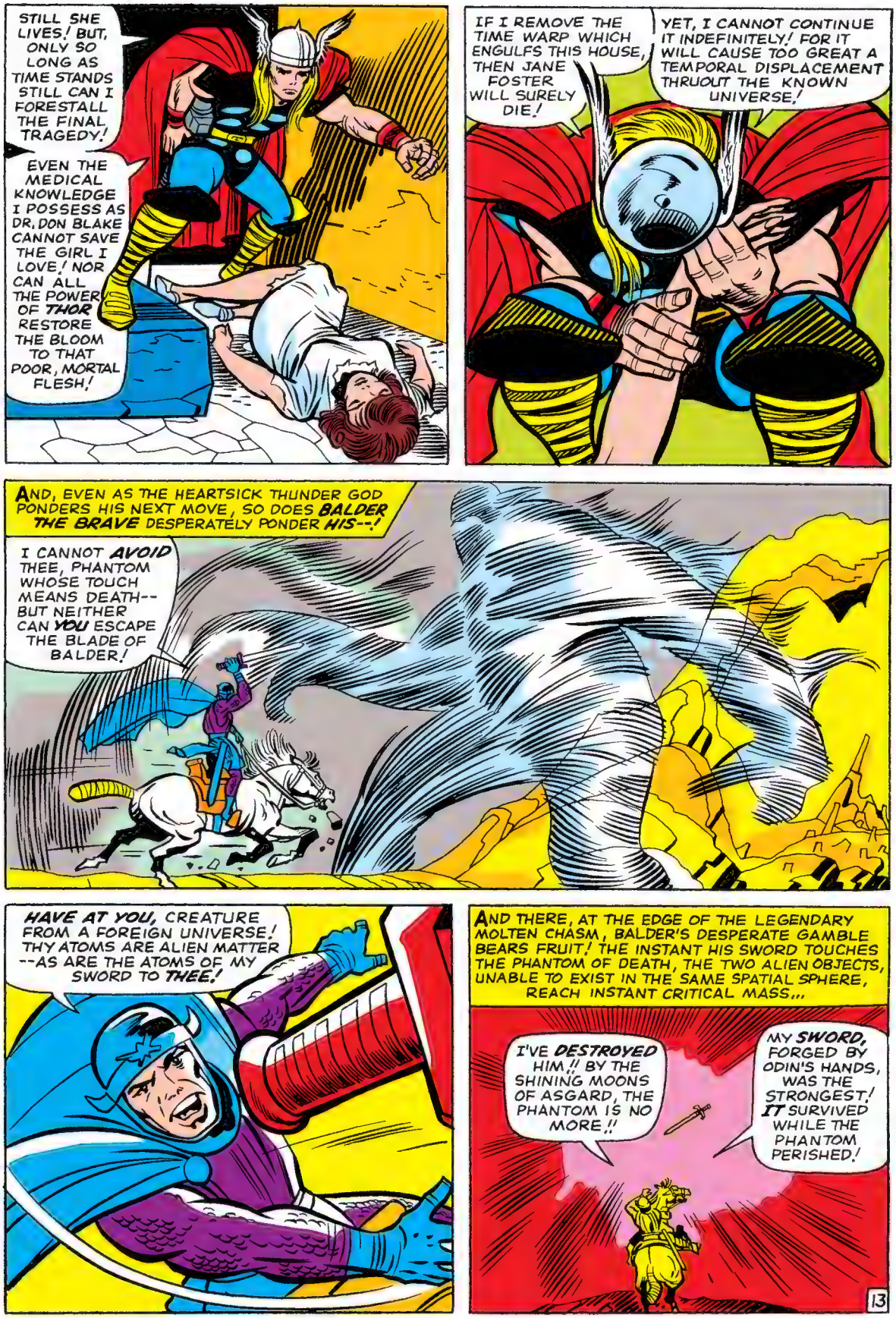

--EVEN TO THE AREA WHERE HIDES THE COBRA!
WHAT MADNESS IS THIS?? SHOCK WAVES-- STRIKING ME FROM NOWHERE!


UNABLE TO BEAR THE PAINFUL PRODDING, THE SERPENTINE MENACE SPEEDS THRU THE INTERIOR OF THE BUILDING'S POWER PLANT LIKE A RUN-AWAY THUNDERBOLT!!


UNTIL...
HYDE, HELP! SAVE ME! SAVE ME!!
SO THERE YOU ARE! I KNEW IT WAS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME!


REALIZING THE THUNDER GOD HAS TRICKED HIM OUT OF HIDING, THE WILY COBRA TRIES TO FLEE--BUT HIS LIMBS ARE STILL TOO WEAK...
ALTHOUGH YOUR HEART IS EVIL ENOUGH...


...NEITHER YOU NOR HYDE HAVE THE WIT NOR CUNNING FOR TRUE ARCH-VILLAINY!
BUT I CAN DALLY NO LONGER WITH SUCH AS THESE--I MUST RETURN TO MY LOVED ONE AND PONDER HER FATE!


STILL SHE LIVES! BUT, ONLY SO LONG AS TIME STANDS STILL CAN I FORESTALL THE FINAL TRAGEDY!
EVEN THE MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE I POSSESS AS DR. DON BLAKE CANNOT SAVE THE GIRL I LOVE! NOR CAN ALL THE POWER OF THOR RESTORE THE BLOOM TO THAT POOR, MORTAL FLESH!
IF I REMOVE THE TIME WARP WHICH ENGULFS THIS HOUSE, THEN JANE FOSTER WILL SURELY DIE!
YET, I CANNOT CONTINUE IT INDEFINITELY! FOR IT WILL CAUSE TOO GREAT A TEMPORAL DISPLACEMENT THRUOUT THE KNOWN UNIVERSE!
AND, EVEN AS THE HEARTSICK THUNDER GOD PONDERS HIS NEXT MOVE, SO DOES BALDER THE BRAVE DESPERATELY PONDER HIS--!
I CANNOT AVOID THEE, PHANTOM WHOSE TOUCH MEANS DEATH-- BUT NEITHER CAN YOU ESCAPE THE BLADE OF BALDER!
HAVE AT YOU, CREATURE FROM A FOREIGN UNIVERSE! THY ATOMS ARE ALIEN MATTER --AS ARE THE ATOMS OF MY SWORD TO THEE!
AND THERE, AT THE EDGE OF THE LEGENDARY MOLTEN CHASM, BALDER'S DESPERATE GAMBLE BEARS FRUIT! THE INSTANT HIS SWORD TOUCHES THE PHANTOM OF DEATH, THE TWO ALIEN OBJECTS, UNABLE TO EXIST IN THE SAME SPATIAL SPHERE, REACH INSTANT CRITICAL MASS...
I'VE DESTROYED HIM!! BY THE SHINING MOONS OF ASGARD, THE PHANTOM IS NO MORE!!
MY SWORD, FORGED BY ODIN'S HANDS, WAS THE STRONGEST! IT SURVIVED WHILE THE PHANTOM PERISHED!

BUT, BALDER HAS LITTLE TIME FOR REJOICING! HIS QUEST MUST CONTINUE! ONWARD HE RIDES, NEVER STOPPING, NEVER FALTERING, UNTIL HE REACHES THE FOREST OF ETERNAL NIGHTMARE PLANTS...

SUDDENLY REALIZING THE GRAVE DANGER, BALDER QUICKLY COVERS HIS STEED'S HEAD WITH HIS OWN GREATCAPE! THEN, WITH ONLY HIS SUPERB STAMINA AND RESOLVE TO SUSTAIN HIM, HE CROSSES THE FATAL PLAIN...

I MUST NOT WEAKEN! I DARE NOT SHUT MY EYES, LEST THE ETERNAL SLEEP DESCEND UPON ME!

BUT, NO SOONER HAS HE SURVIVED THAT AWESOME MENACE, THEN HE FINDS...

THE ***VALLEY OF SWORDS*** LIES AHEAD! NO ASGARDIAN HAS EVER SAFELY TRAVERSED THOSE UPTURNED BLADES BEFORE!

BUT, ***THOR,*** WHOM MY HEART HOLDS AS DEAR AS MY LIEGE, IS IN GRAVE NEED! I SHALL NOT FAIL HIM!

THUS, HAVING RIPPED HIS GREATCAPE TO SHREDS AND TIED LARGE FLAT ROCKS TO HIS STALLION'S HOOVES WITH THE FRAGMENTS, THE BRAVE BALDER ONCE AGAIN OVERCOMES A SEEMINGLY INSURMOUNTABLE OBSTACLE!

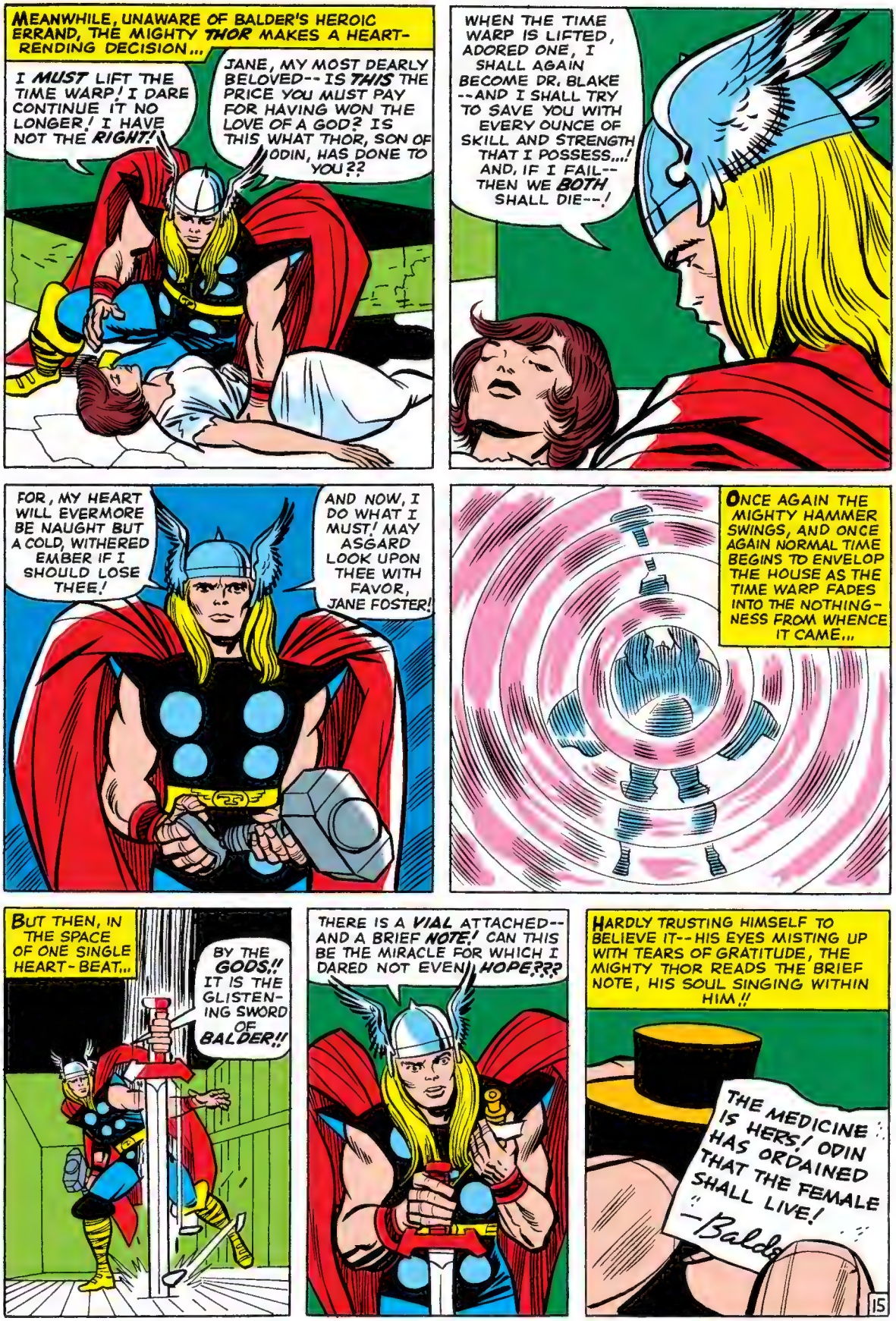
UNTIL AT LAST, THE FINAL DANGER HAS BEEN MET AND VANQUISHED...

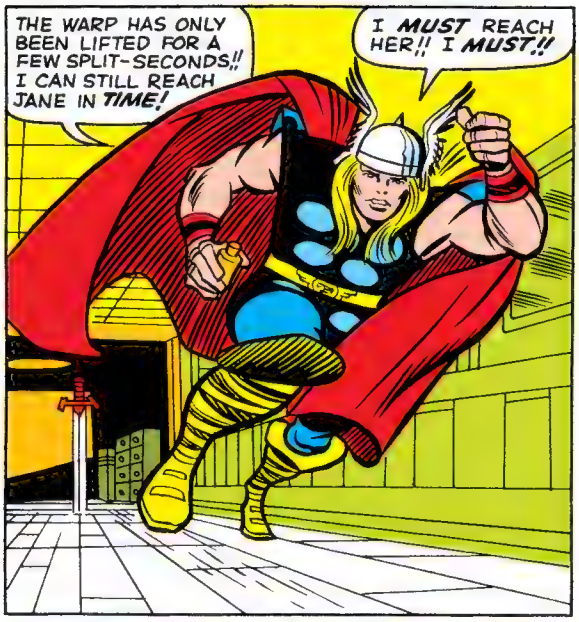
ONLY YOUR GREAT SPEED, MY FAITHFUL MOUNT, HAVE ENABLED US TO SAFELY CROSS THE VALLEY OF AVALANCHES!! AND NOW-- OUR GOAL IS IN SIGHT--!

WHO APPROACHES THE HOME OF ***HARDOL, THE HEALER??***

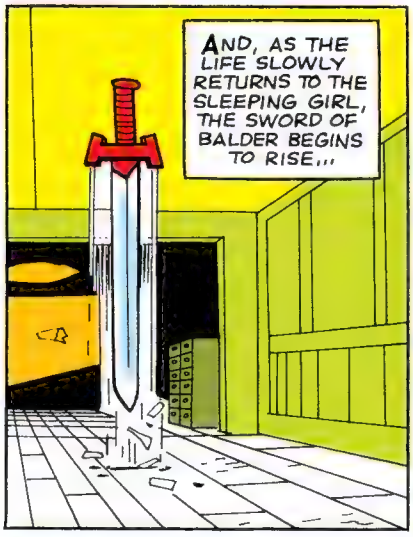
BALDER DOES, AT THE BEHEST OF NOBLE ***ODIN!***

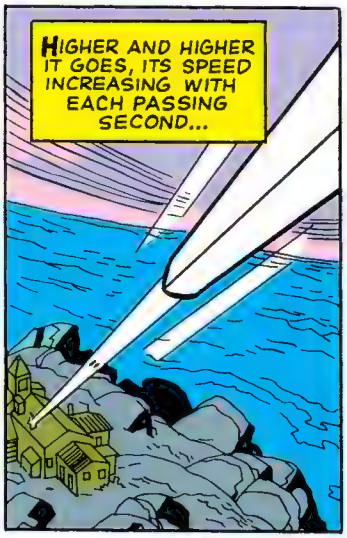
THEN COME FORTH, BRAVE ONE, AND STATE YOUR REQUEST!

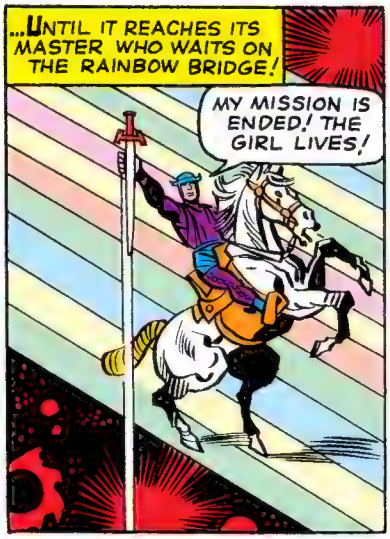

MEANWHILE, UNAWARE OF BALDER'S HEROIC ERRAND, THE MIGHTY THOR MAKES A HEART-RENDING DECISION...
I MUST LIFT THE TIME WARP! I DARE CONTINUE IT NO LONGER! I HAVE NOT THE RIGHT!
JANE, MY MOST DEARLY BELOVED-- IS THIS THE PRICE YOU MUST PAY FOR HAVING WON THE LOVE OF A GOD? IS THIS WHAT THOR, SON OF ODIN, HAS DONE TO YOU??
WHEN THE TIME WARP IS LIFTED, ADORED ONE, I SHALL AGAIN BECOME DR. BLAKE --AND I SHALL TRY TO SAVE YOU WITH EVERY OUNCE OF SKILL AND STRENGTH THAT I POSSESS...! AND, IF I FAIL-- THEN WE BOTH SHALL DIE--!
FOR, MY HEART WILL EVERMORE BE NAUGHT BUT A COLD, WITHERED EMBER IF I SHOULD LOSE THEE!
AND NOW, I DO WHAT I MUST! MAY ASGARD LOOK UPON THEE WITH FAVOR, JANE FOSTER!
ONCE AGAIN THE MIGHTY HAMMER SWINGS, AND ONCE AGAIN NORMAL TIME BEGINS TO ENVELOP THE HOUSE AS THE TIME WARP FADES INTO THE NOTHINGNESS FROM WHENCE IT CAME...
BUT THEN, IN THE SPACE OF ONE SINGLE HEART-BEAT...
BY THE GODS!! IT IS THE GLISTENING SWORD OF BALDER!!
THERE IS A VIAL ATTACHED-- AND A BRIEF NOTE! CAN THIS BE THE MIRACLE FOR WHICH I DARED NOT EVEN HOPE???
HARDLY TRUSTING HIMSELF TO BELIEVE IT--HIS EYES MISTING UP WITH TEARS OF GRATITUDE, THE MIGHTY THOR READS THE BRIEF NOTE, HIS SOUL SINGING WITHIN HIM!!
THE MEDICINE IS HERS! ODIN HAS ORDAINED THAT THE FEMALE SHALL LIVE! —Balder
15

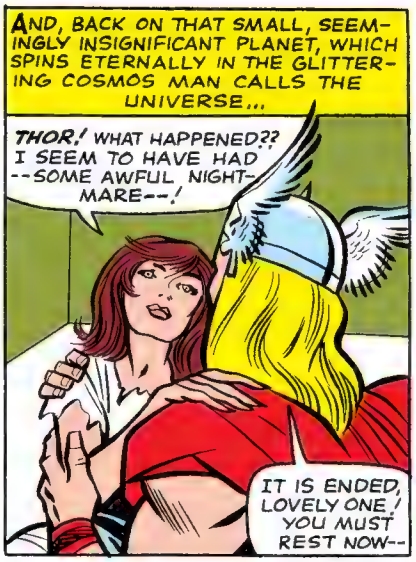


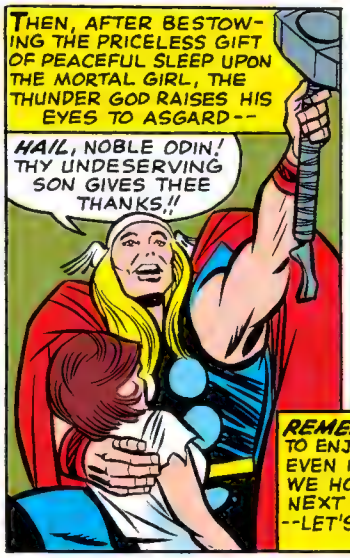
MY DARLING--YOU CAN'T HEAR ME--CAN'T SEE ME--BUT LET YOUR HEART KNOW THAT YOUR LOVED ONE IS HERE--WITH THESE WORDS FOR YOU--
YOU WILL LIVE, MY BELOVED! YOU WILL SEE MANY DAWNS, MANY SUNSETS, AND PERHAPS, ODIN WILLING, WE'LL ONE DAY SHARE THEM TOGETHER!

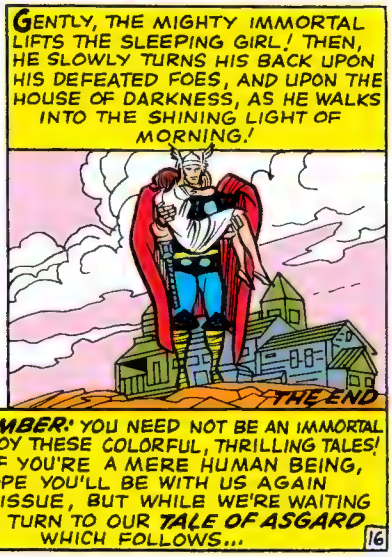







AND, BACK ON THAT SMALL, SEEMINGLY INSIGNIFICANT PLANET, WHICH SPINS ETERNALLY IN THE GLITTERING COSMOS MAN CALLS THE UNIVERSE...
THOR! WHAT HAPPENED?? I SEEM TO HAVE HAD --SOME AWFUL NIGHTMARE--!
IT IS ENDED, LOVELY ONE! YOU MUST REST NOW--

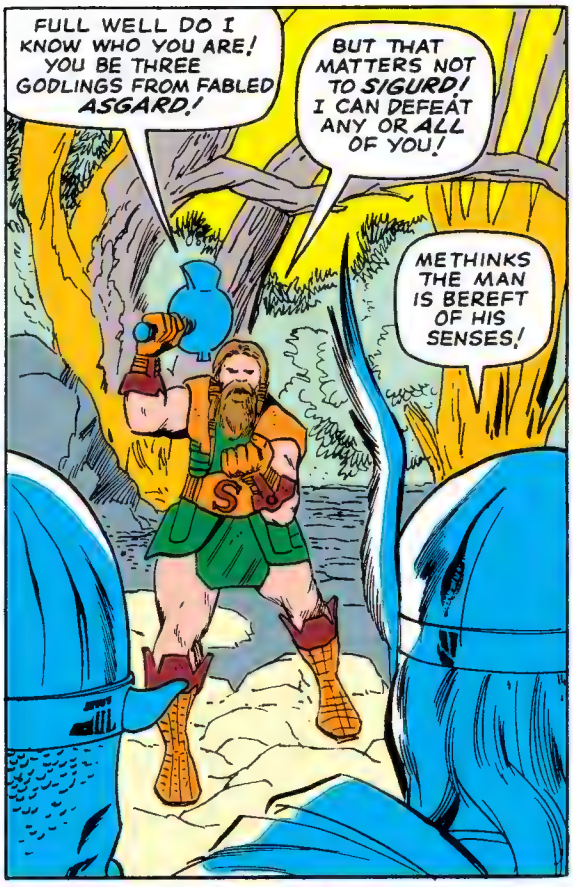

THEN, AFTER BESTOWING THE PRICELESS GIFT OF PEACEFUL SLEEP UPON THE MORTAL GIRL, THE THUNDER GOD RAISES HIS EYES TO ASGARD--
HAIL, NOBLE ODIN! THY UNDESERVING SON GIVES THEE THANKS!!


GENTLY, THE MIGHTY IMMORTAL LIFTS THE SLEEPING GIRL! THEN, HE SLOWLY TURNS HIS BACK UPON HIS DEFEATED FOES, AND UPON THE HOUSE OF DARKNESS, AS HE WALKS INTO THE SHINING LIGHT OF MORNING!
THE END

REMEMBER: YOU NEED NOT BE AN IMMORTAL TO ENJOY THESE COLORFUL, THRILLING TALES! EVEN IF YOU'RE A MERE HUMAN BEING, WE HOPE YOU'LL BE WITH US AGAIN NEXT ISSUE, BUT WHILE WE'RE WAITING --LET'S TURN TO OUR TALE OF ASGARD WHICH FOLLOWS...

A MARVEL MASTERWORK PIN-UP

Tales of ASGARD
HOME OF THE MIGHTY NORSE GODS!
"The SECRET of SIGURD!"
STOP! YOU MAY COME NO FURTHER!! I AM SIGURD... AND THIS FOREST IS MINE!
RETURNING FROM A SPECIAL MISSION FOR ODIN, WE FIND THOR, LOKI, AND BALDER! SOON, LOKI SLYLY SUGGESTS THEY TAKE A SHORT-CUT THRU THE FORBIDDEN FOREST OF THE MYSTERIOUS SIGURD... AND THUS BEGINS OUR TENSE, GRIPPING DRAMA....!
SIGURD!
PERHAPS HE KNOWS NOT WHO WE ARE!
HE SEEMS EAGER FOR THE THRILL OF BATTLE!
SUPERBLY WRITTEN BY STAN LEE
SUPREMELY DRAWN BY JACK KIRBY
SAVAGELY INKED BY VINCE COLLETTA
SAGATIOUSLY LETTERED BY ARTIE SIMEK

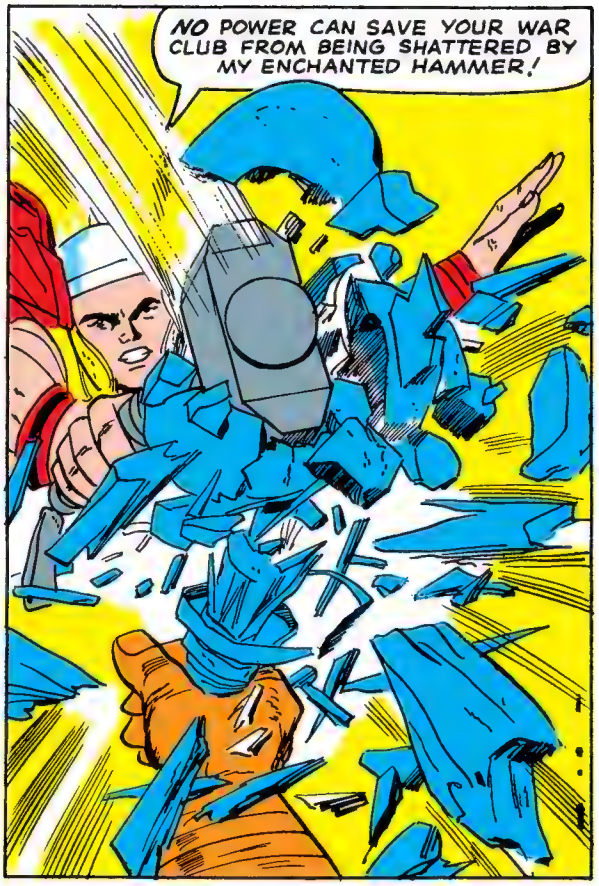

FULL WELL DO I KNOW WHO YOU ARE! YOU BE THREE GODLINGS FROM FABLED ASGARD!
BUT THAT MATTERS NOT TO SIGURD! I CAN DEFEAT ANY OR ALL OF YOU!
METHINKS THE MAN IS BEREFT OF HIS SENSES!

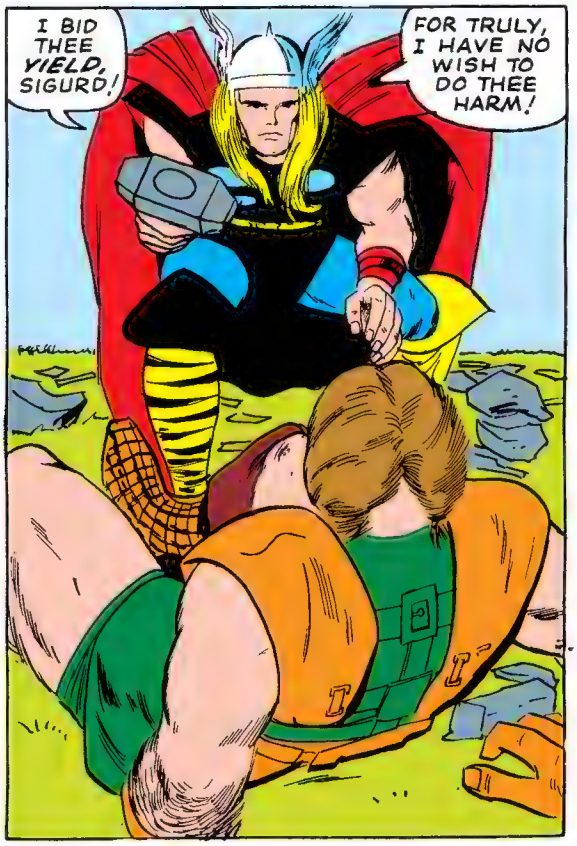
BAH! ONLY WEAKLINGS MAKE IDLE BOASTS SUCH AS HIS! I SAY THE CREATURE IS NO MATCH FOR YOU, THOR!
BE THAT AS IT MAY! I HAVE NO DESIRE TO ENGAGE IN NEEDLESS COMBAT!
I'VE HEARD OF SIGURD! THERE IS SOME STRANGE SECRET ABOUT HIM-- BUT I CANNOT REMEMBER WHAT IT IS!

GODLINGS OF ASGARD-- BAH! YOU ARE COWARDS ALL! NONE OF YOU DARES TO BATTLE THE POWERFUL SIGURD!
STAY YOUR TONGUE, RECKLESS ONE! NONE MAY SPEAK THUS OF THE SUBJECTS OF ODIN-- NOT WHILE THOR LIVES!

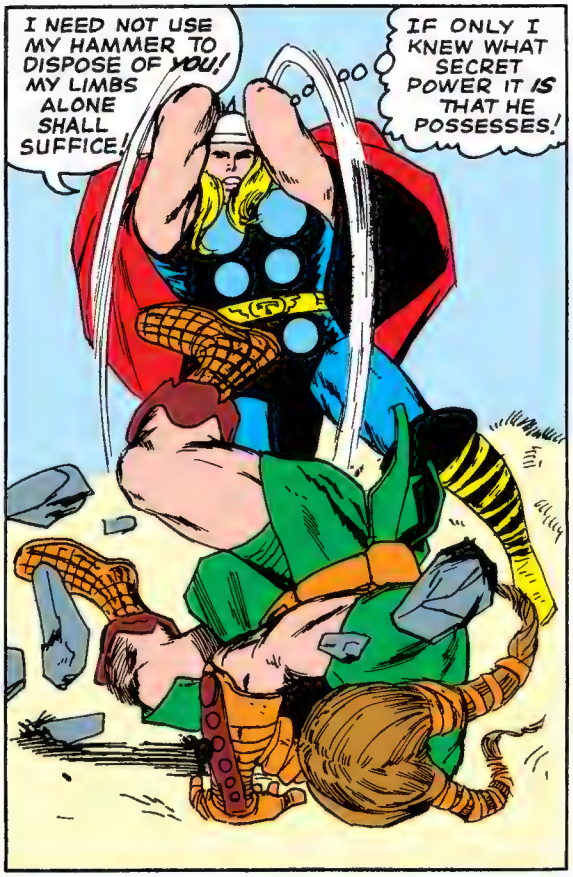
THIS IS YOUR CHANCE, THOR! MAKE HIM REGRET HIS RASH, INSULTING WORDS!
LOKI SEEMS STRANGELY ANXIOUS FOR THOR TO BATTLE SIGURD!! I WONDER WHY??
NOW, SIGURD! WE SHALL SEE WHO THE COWARD IS!
2

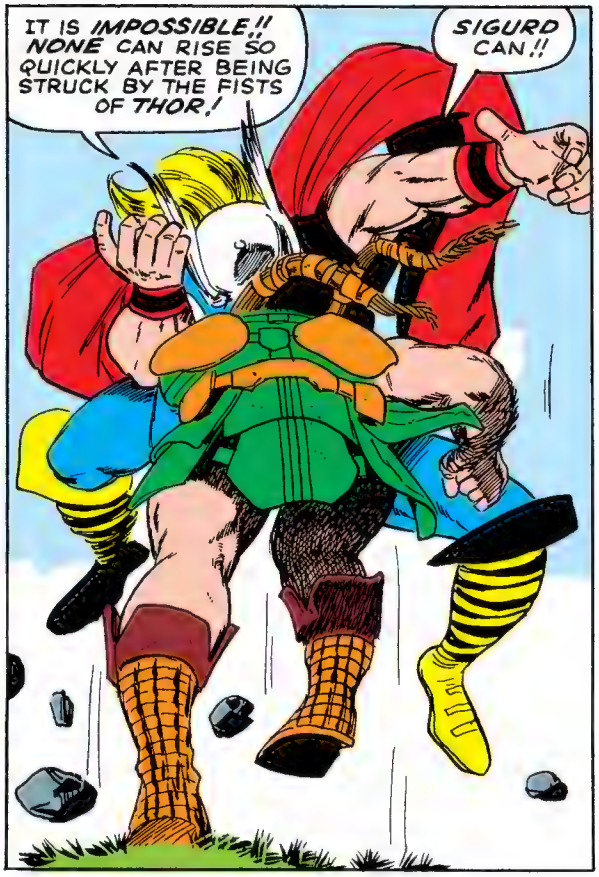
BE FOREWARNED, SIGURD -- I AM THOR, SON OF NOBLE ODIN!
AND I AM SIGURD, POSSESSOR OF THE GREAT SECRET POWER!
SECRET POWER?

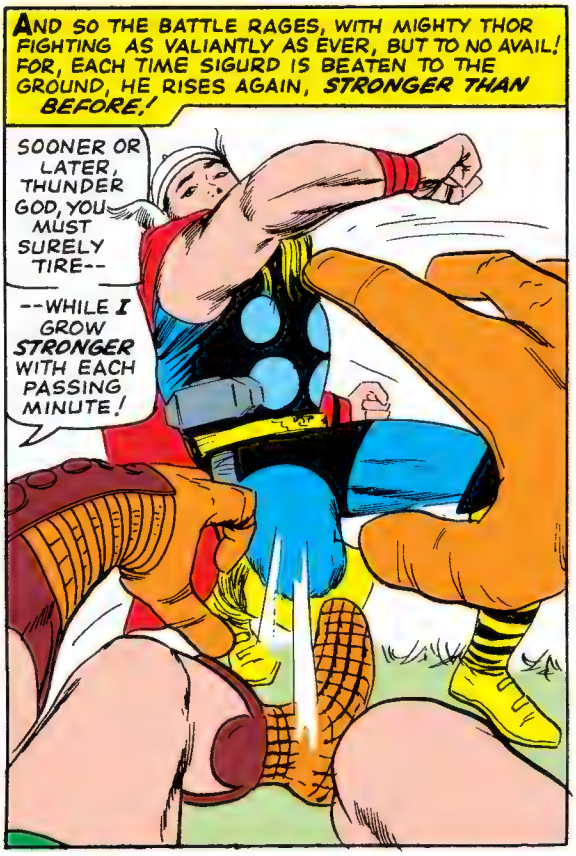

NO POWER CAN SAVE YOUR WAR CLUB FROM BEING SHATTERED BY MY ENCHANTED HAMMER!


I BID THEE YIELD, SIGURD!
FOR TRULY, I HAVE NO WISH TO DO THEE HARM!

YOUTHFUL FOOL! SIGURD YIELDS TO NO ONE! IT IS YOU WHO SHALL TASTE THE BITTER DREGS OF DEFEAT!
HE SEEMS STRONGER NOW THAN BEFORE I STRUCK HIM! BUT-- HOW CAN THAT BE?
DO NOT FORGET, GODLING-- I POSSESS THE SECRET POWER!
3

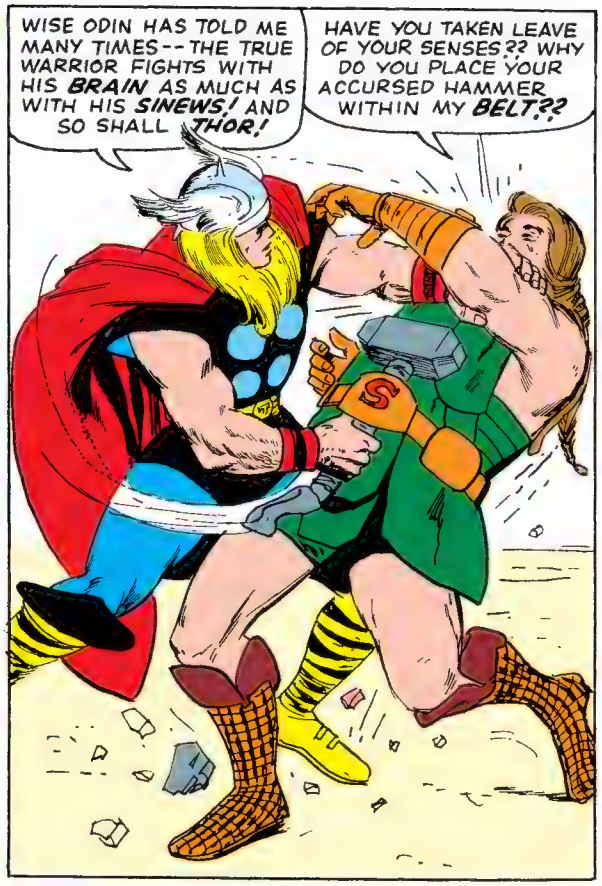

I NEED NOT USE MY HAMMER TO DISPOSE OF YOU! MY LIMBS ALONE SHALL SUFFICE!
IF ONLY I KNEW WHAT SECRET POWER IT IS THAT HE POSSESSES!

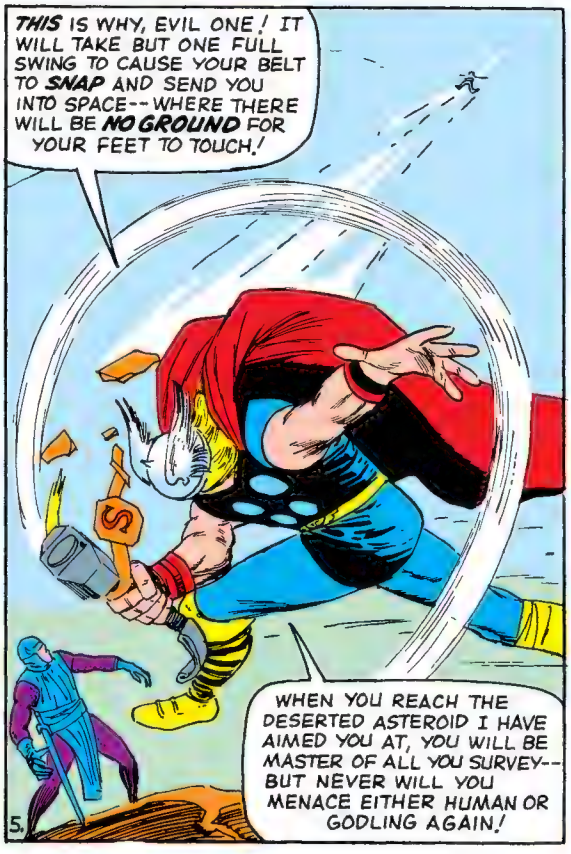

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE!! NONE CAN RISE SO QUICKLY AFTER BEING STRUCK BY THE FISTS OF THOR!
SIGURD CAN!!


AND SO THE BATTLE RAGES, WITH MIGHTY THOR FIGHTING AS VALIANTLY AS EVER, BUT TO NO AVAIL! FOR, EACH TIME SIGURD IS BEATEN TO THE GROUND, HE RISES AGAIN, STRONGER THAN BEFORE!
SOONER OR LATER, THUNDER GOD, YOU MUST SURELY TIRE--
--WHILE I GROW STRONGER WITH EACH PASSING MINUTE!

IT LOOKS AS THOUGH THOR HAS FINALLY MET HIS MATCH, BALDER!
AND YOU ACT AS THOUGH YOU'RE PLEASED! IN FACT, YOU SUGGESTED TAKING THIS TRAIL THRU SIGURD'S FOREST! AND YOU-- WAIT! NOW I REMEMBER WHAT SIGURD'S SECRET POWER IS!!!

THOR--HEED MY WORDS! SIGURD IS THE SON OF THE EARTH SPRITES! EACH TIME HIS BODY STRIKES THE GROUND, THEY GIVE IT NEW AND GREATER STRENGTH!
SO! THAT IS THE SECRET OF SIGURD!
BUT KNOWING IT WILL DO YOU NO GOOD, THUNDER GOD! YOU CANNOT PREVENT ME FROM CONSTANTLY INCREASING MY STRENGTH BY CONTACT WITH THE GROUND!


WISE ODIN HAS TOLD ME MANY TIMES--THE TRUE WARRIOR FIGHTS WITH HIS BRAIN AS MUCH AS WITH HIS SINEWS! AND SO SHALL THOR!
HAVE YOU TAKEN LEAVE OF YOUR SENSES?? WHY DO YOU PLACE YOUR ACCURSED HAMMER WITHIN MY BELT??


THIS IS WHY, EVIL ONE! IT WILL TAKE BUT ONE FULL SWING TO CAUSE YOUR BELT TO SNAP AND SEND YOU INTO SPACE--WHERE THERE WILL BE NO GROUND FOR YOUR FEET TO TOUCH!
WHEN YOU REACH THE DESERTED ASTEROID I HAVE AIMED YOU AT, YOU WILL BE MASTER OF ALL YOU SURVEY--BUT NEVER WILL YOU MENACE EITHER HUMAN OR GODLING AGAIN!

YOU SEEM DISAPPOINTED, CLEVER LOKI! CAN IT BE THAT YOU EXPECTED A SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT RESULT?
NOT AT ALL, MIGHTY HALF-BROTHER! I REJOICE WITH YOU IN YOUR MOMENT OF TRIUMPH!
I PRAY THAT THOR NEVER TURNS HIS BACK ON LOKI, FOR THE EVIL ONE'S HATRED IS ALMOST BEYOND UNDERSTANDING!
THE END

YES, FOR AGES THE MENACE OF LOKI HAS BEEN THE GOLDEN HAIRED GOD'S CHIEF CONCERN--FOR LOKI EVER HAS BEEN, AND EVER WILL BE--ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL OF ALL THE IMMORTALS! BUT, POWERFUL THOUGH HE IS, MIGHTY THOR HAS ALWAYS BEEN HIS MASTER, AND IN THE NAME OF ODIN, WE PRAY HE REMAINS SO TILL THE END OF TIME!

MARVEL COMICS GROUP 12¢

JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY WITH THE MIGHTY THOR

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

IND.

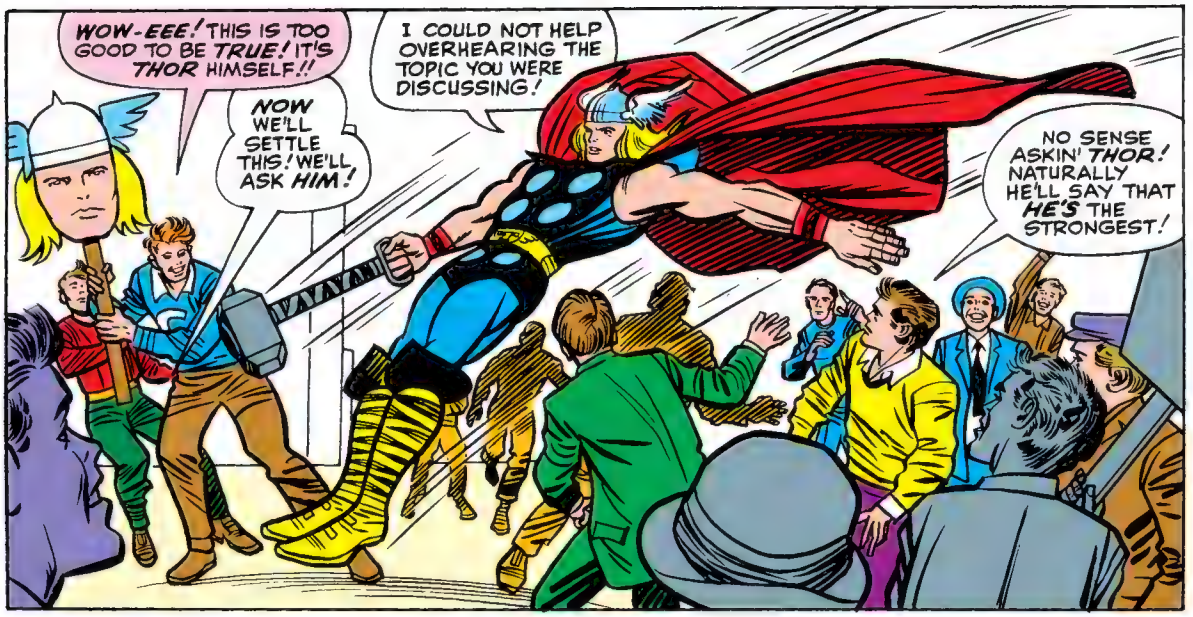
112 JAN

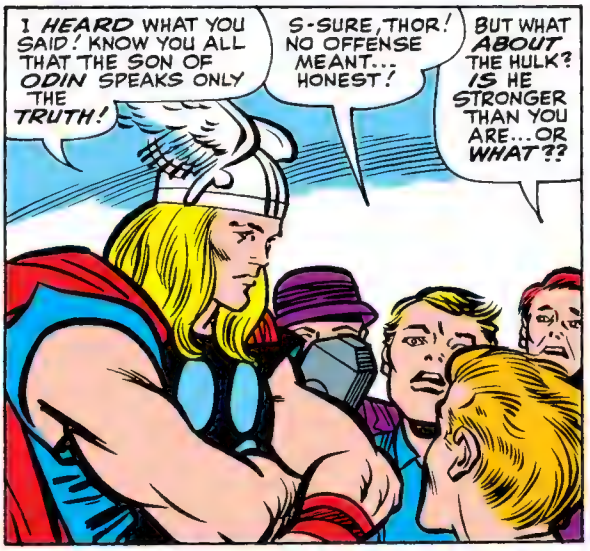
THE EPIC BATTLE OF THE AGE!

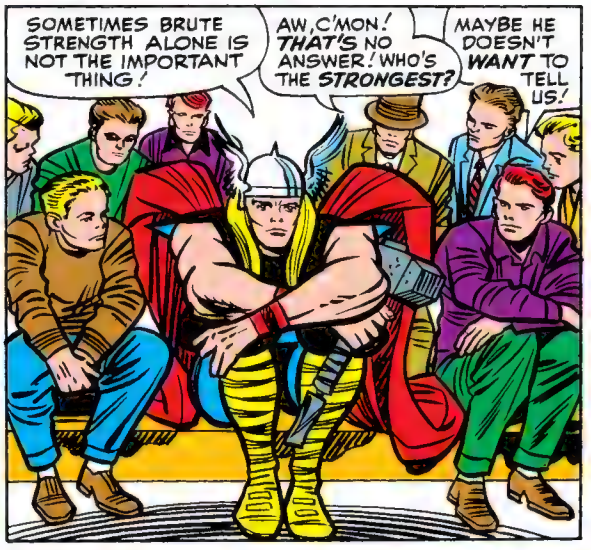
THE MIGHTY THUNDER GOD! VS. THE INCREDIBLE HULK!

HERE IT IS! THE BATTLE YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR!
ANOTHER ALL-TIME GREAT FROM MIGHTY MARVEL, POWERHOUSE of IDEAS!

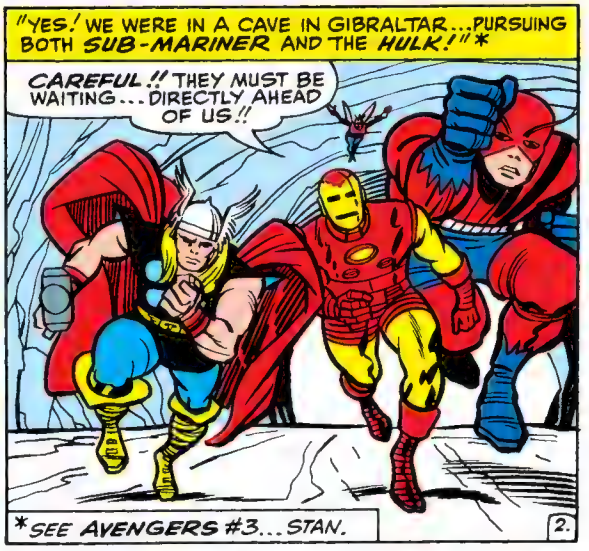
THE MIGHTY THOR BATTLES THE INCREDIBLE HULK!
A STAN LEE-JACK KIRBY MARVEL MASTERWORK!
INKING BY CHIC STONE LETTERING BY S.ROSEN
THOSE YOUNGSTERS SEEM TO BE ARGUING ABOUT WHO IS... STRONGER...THE HULK...OR MYSELF!
THOR IS STRONGER THAN ANYBODY!
YEAH? TAKE AWAY THOR'S HAMMER AND WHAT HAVE YOU GOT?
YAY, HULK!
AW, THOR COULD MOP UP THE PLACE WITH THAT DUMB HULK!
DUMB, HUH? SO, HOW COME NOBODY'S EVER LICKED 'IM?
THOR IS THE GREATEST!
NO ONE CAN BEAT OL' GREEN-SKIN!

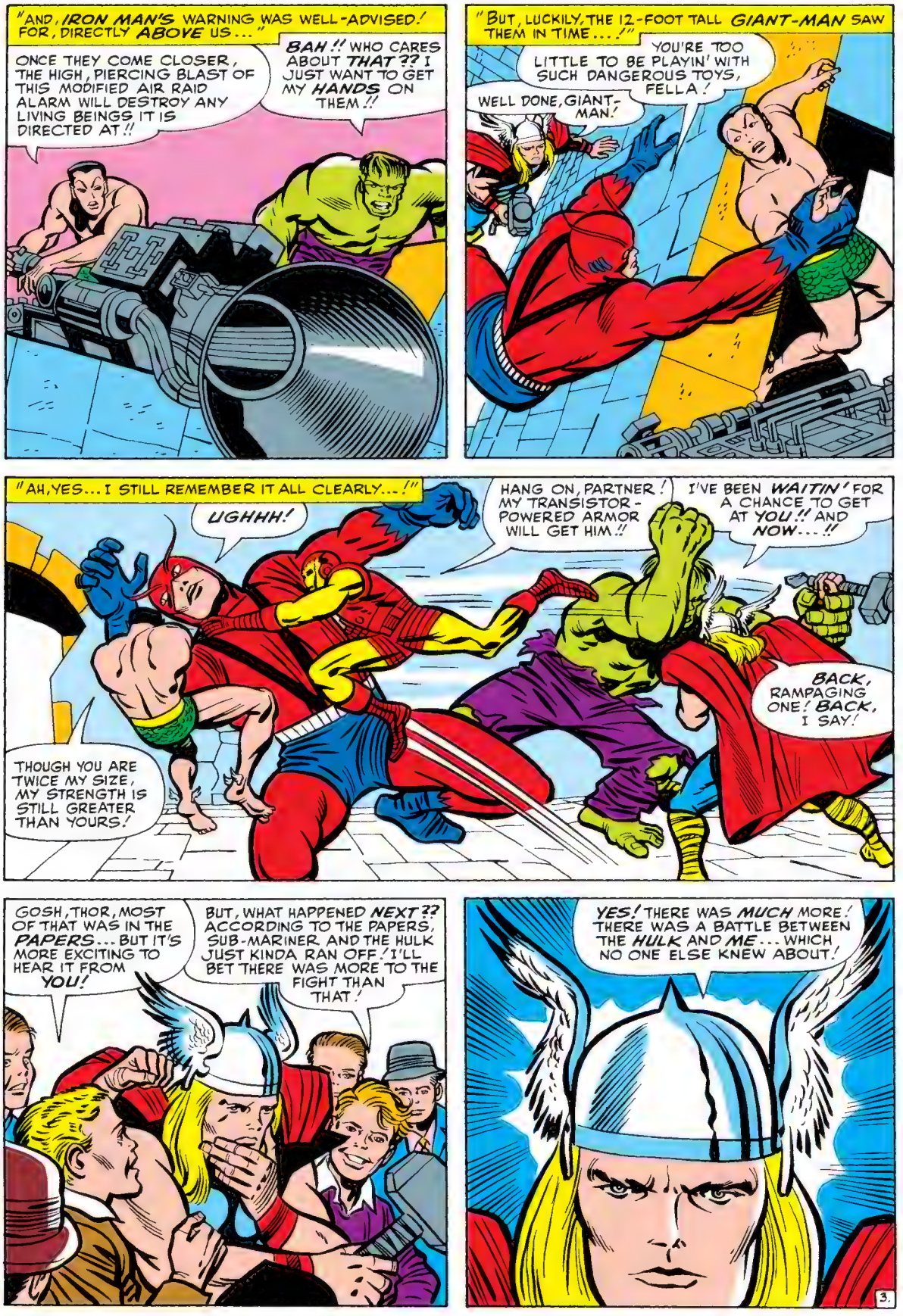

WOW-EEE! THIS IS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE! IT'S THOR HIMSELF!!
NOW WE'LL SETTLE THIS! WE'LL ASK HIM!
I COULD NOT HELP OVERHEARING THE TOPIC YOU WERE DISCUSSING!
NO SENSE ASKIN' THOR! NATURALLY HE'LL SAY THAT HE'S THE STRONGEST!


I HEARD WHAT YOU SAID! KNOW YOU ALL THAT THE SON OF ODIN SPEAKS ONLY THE TRUTH!
S-SURE, THOR! NO OFFENSE MEANT... HONEST!
BUT WHAT ABOUT THE HULK? IS HE STRONGER THAN YOU ARE... OR WHAT??

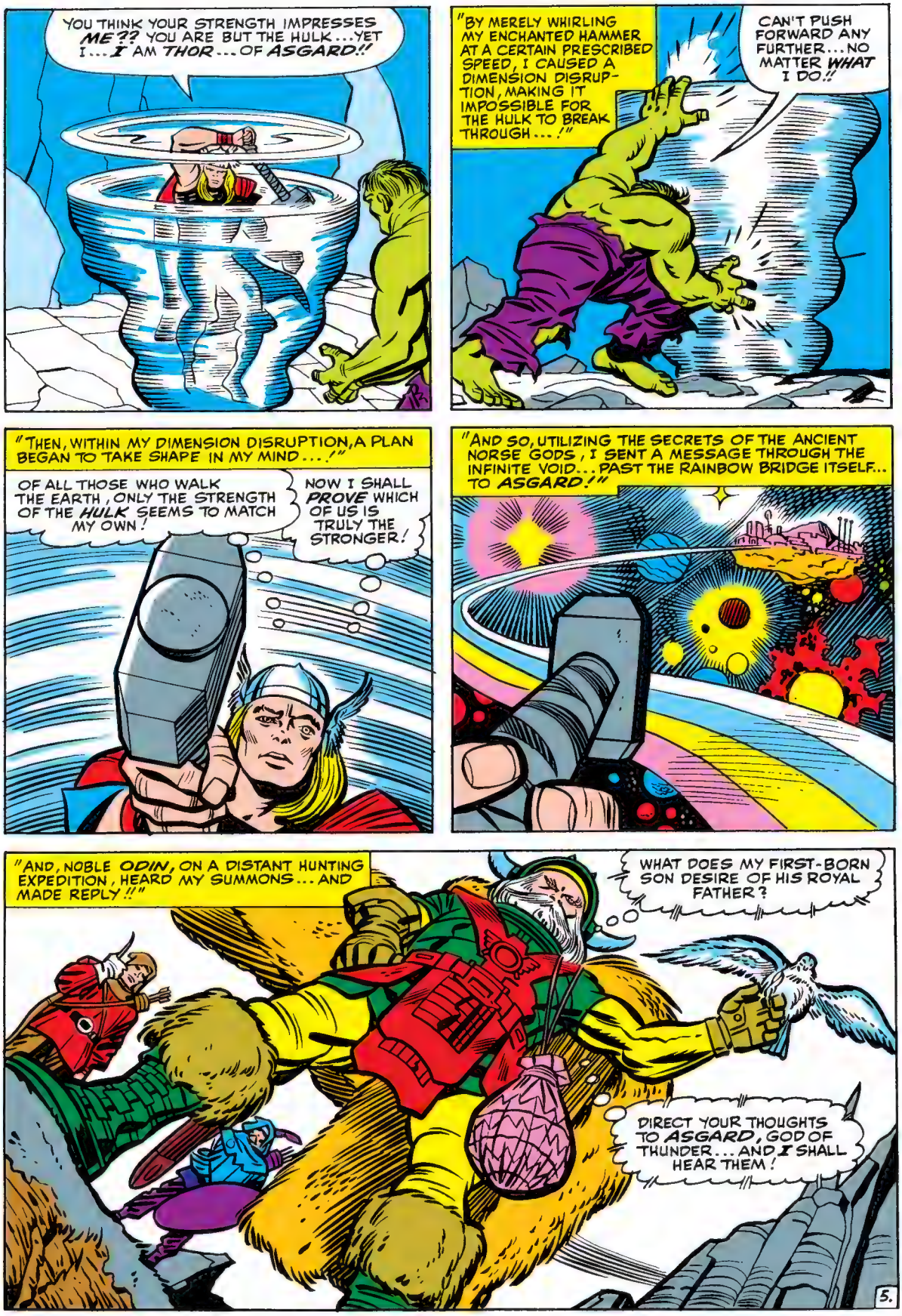

SOMETIMES BRUTE STRENGTH ALONE IS NOT THE IMPORTANT THING!
AW, C'MON! THAT'S NO ANSWER! WHO'S THE STRONGEST?
MAYBE HE DOESN'T WANT TO TELL US!

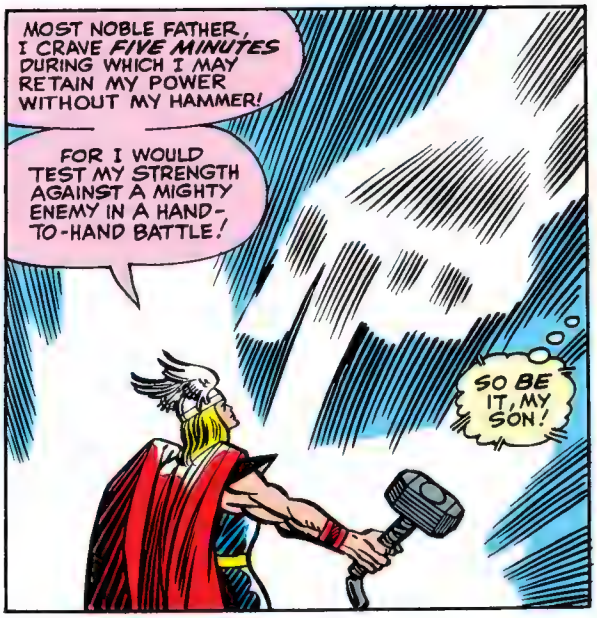
NO! I SHALL TELL YOU! HARKEN...
THERE WAS A TIME THAT I FOUGHT THE HULK! PARTS OF THAT BATTLE ARE NOW IN THE PUBLIC RECORD... WHILE PARTS ARE NOT!
THAT'S RIGHT! I REMEMBER... IT WAS MONTHS AGO ...YOU WERE WITH THE REST OF THE AVENGERS..!


"YES! WE WERE IN A CAVE IN GIBRALTAR...PURSUING BOTH SUB-MARINER AND THE HULK!" *
CAREFUL!! THEY MUST BE WAITING... DIRECTLY AHEAD OF US!!
*SEE AVENGERS #3... STAN.
2.

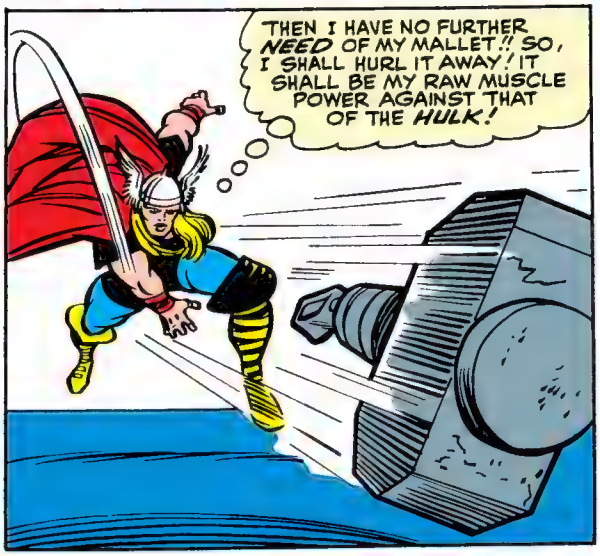

"AND, IRON MAN'S WARNING WAS WELL-ADVISED! FOR, DIRECTLY ABOVE US..."
ONCE THEY COME CLOSER, THE HIGH, PIERCING BLAST OF THIS MODIFIED AIR RAID ALARM WILL DESTROY ANY LIVING BEINGS IT IS DIRECTED AT!!
BAH!! WHO CARES ABOUT THAT?? I JUST WANT TO GET MY HANDS ON THEM!!
"BUT, LUCKILY, THE 12-FOOT TALL GIANT-MAN SAW THEM IN TIME...!"
WELL DONE, GIANT-MAN!
YOU'RE TOO LITTLE TO BE PLAYIN' WITH SUCH DANGEROUS TOYS, FELLA!
"AH, YES... I STILL REMEMBER IT ALL CLEARLY...!"
UGHHH!
HANG ON, PARTNER! MY TRANSISTOR-POWERED ARMOR WILL GET HIM!!
I'VE BEEN WAITIN' FOR A CHANCE TO GET AT YOU!! AND NOW...!!
BACK, RAMPAGING ONE! BACK, I SAY!
THOUGH YOU ARE TWICE MY SIZE, MY STRENGTH IS STILL GREATER THAN YOURS!
GOSH, THOR, MOST OF THAT WAS IN THE PAPERS... BUT IT'S MORE EXCITING TO HEAR IT FROM YOU!
BUT, WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?? ACCORDING TO THE PAPERS, SUB-MARINER AND THE HULK JUST KINDA RAN OFF! I'LL BET THERE WAS MORE TO THE FIGHT THAN THAT!
YES! THERE WAS MUCH MORE! THERE WAS A BATTLE BETWEEN THE HULK AND ME... WHICH NO ONE ELSE KNEW ABOUT!
3.

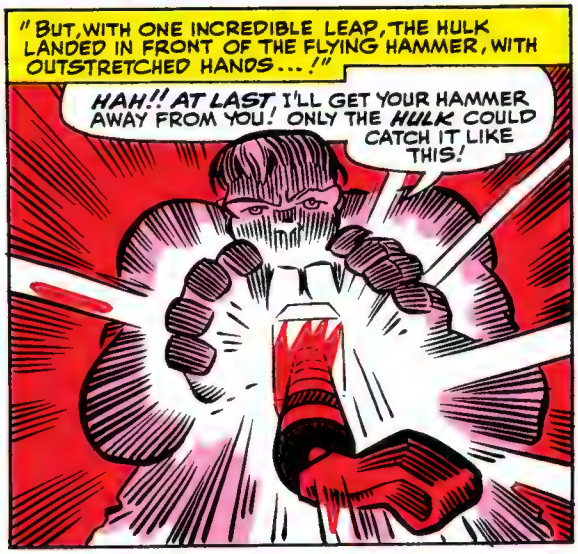
"IT HAPPENED AT THE HEIGHT OF THE BATTLE... WHILE MY FELLOW AVENGERS WERE TRYING TO FIND A WAY TO STOP PRINCE NAMOR WITHOUT ACTUALLY INJURING HIM! THE HULK AND I WERE ALL BUT FORGOTTEN IN THE SHADOWS..."
"THE MINUTES TICKED BY, AS WE BOTH FOUGHT SO FURIOUSLY, WE DIDN'T REALIZE THAT WE WERE BECOMING SEPARATED FROM THE OTHERS!"
WHOOOM!
"NEVER HAD I SEEN SUCH RAGE, SUCH FURY, IN ANY LIVING BEING!! THE HULK FOUGHT LIKE A DEMON POSSESSED... ACTUALLY TEARING OFF SECTIONS OF THE CAVE WALL ITSELF IN A DESPERATE ATTEMPT TO TRAP ME!!"
I'LL SMASH YOU LIKE A WORM!! YOU CAN'T DEFEAT ME!! I'M THE HULK!! I'M THE HULK!!
SCRUNCH!
4.

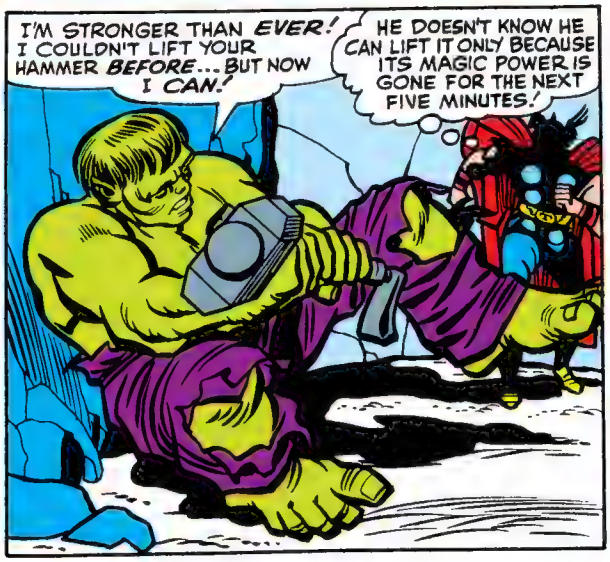

YOU THINK YOUR STRENGTH IMPRESSES ME?? YOU ARE BUT THE HULK...YET I...I AM THOR...OF ASGARD!!
"BY MERELY WHIRLING MY ENCHANTED HAMMER AT A CERTAIN PRESCRIBED SPEED, I CAUSED A DIMENSION DISRUPTION, MAKING IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE HULK TO BREAK THROUGH...!"
CAN'T PUSH FORWARD ANY FURTHER...NO MATTER WHAT I DO!!
"THEN, WITHIN MY DIMENSION DISRUPTION, A PLAN BEGAN TO TAKE SHAPE IN MY MIND...!"
OF ALL THOSE WHO WALK THE EARTH, ONLY THE STRENGTH OF THE HULK SEEMS TO MATCH MY OWN!
NOW I SHALL PROVE WHICH OF US IS TRULY THE STRONGER!
"AND SO, UTILIZING THE SECRETS OF THE ANCIENT NORSE GODS, I SENT A MESSAGE THROUGH THE INFINITE VOID...PAST THE RAINBOW BRIDGE ITSELF... TO ASGARD!"
"AND, NOBLE ODIN, ON A DISTANT HUNTING EXPEDITION, HEARD MY SUMMONS...AND MADE REPLY!!"
WHAT DOES MY FIRST-BORN SON DESIRE OF HIS ROYAL FATHER?
DIRECT YOUR THOUGHTS TO ASGARD, GOD OF THUNDER...AND I SHALL HEAR THEM!
5.


MOST NOBLE FATHER, I CRAVE FIVE MINUTES DURING WHICH I MAY RETAIN MY POWER WITHOUT MY HAMMER!
FOR I WOULD TEST MY STRENGTH AGAINST A MIGHTY ENEMY IN A HAND-TO-HAND BATTLE!
SO BE IT, MY SON!

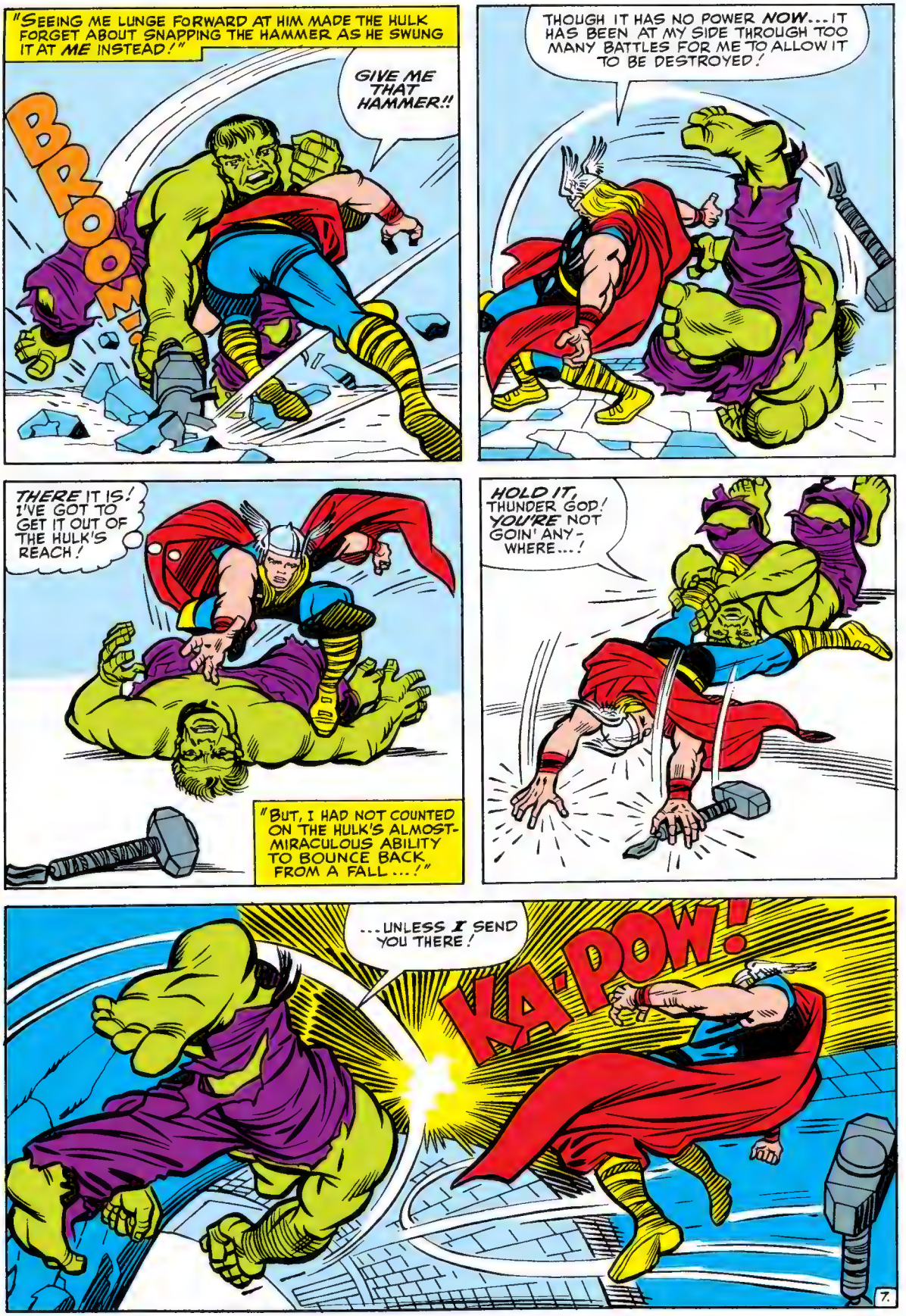
AND, FOR THE NEXT FIVE MINUTES, YOUR HAMMER SHALL LOSE ITS MAGICAL FORCE! YOU NOW FACE YOUR FOE MAN-TO-MAN ... WITH NO ENCHANTED POWER!


THEN I HAVE NO FURTHER NEED OF MY MALLET!! SO, I SHALL HURL IT AWAY! IT SHALL BE MY RAW MUSCLE POWER AGAINST THAT OF THE HULK!


"BUT, WITH ONE INCREDIBLE LEAP, THE HULK LANDED IN FRONT OF THE FLYING HAMMER, WITH OUTSTRETCHED HANDS ...!"
HAH!! AT LAST I'LL GET YOUR HAMMER AWAY FROM YOU! ONLY THE HULK COULD CATCH IT LIKE THIS!

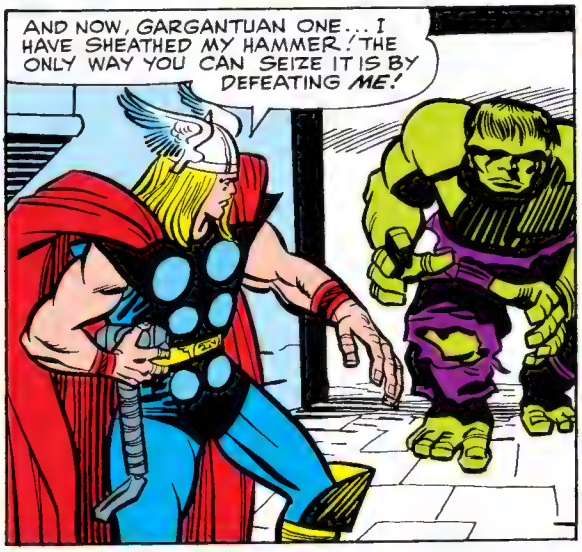

I'M STRONGER THAN EVER! I COULDN'T LIFT YOUR HAMMER BEFORE... BUT NOW I CAN!
HE DOESN'T KNOW HE CAN LIFT IT ONLY BECAUSE ITS MAGIC POWER IS GONE FOR THE NEXT FIVE MINUTES!

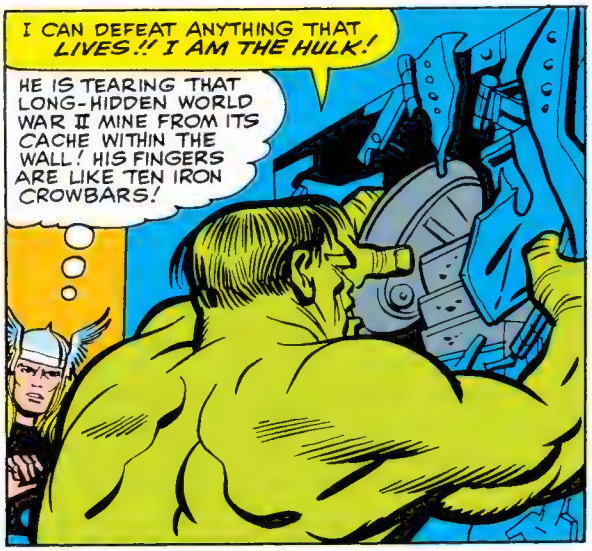
AND NOW, I'LL SNAP IT IN TWO... JUST AS I CAN DO TO YOU... ANY TIME I FEEL LIKE IT!
WITHOUT ITS ENCHANTMENT, MY MALLET MIGHT BE DESTROYED! I CAN'T LET THAT HAPPEN... IT WAS A GIFT FROM ODIN!

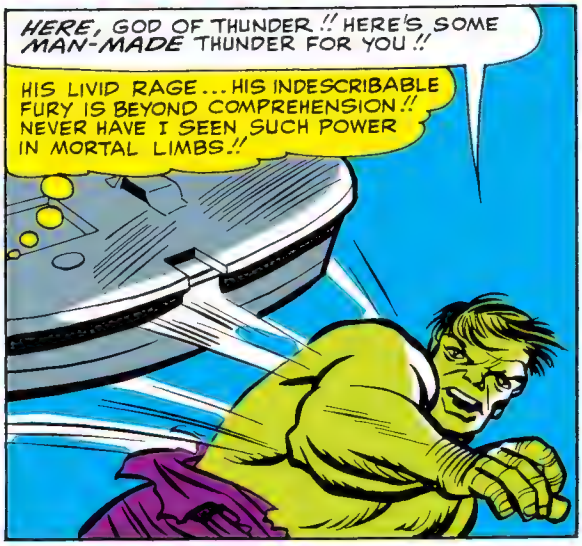

"SEEING ME LUNGE FORWARD AT HIM MADE THE HULK FORGET ABOUT SNAPPING THE HAMMER AS HE SWUNG IT AT ME INSTEAD!"
GIVE ME THAT HAMMER!!
BROOM!
THOUGH IT HAS NO POWER NOW... IT HAS BEEN AT MY SIDE THROUGH TOO MANY BATTLES FOR ME TO ALLOW IT TO BE DESTROYED!
THERE IT IS! I'VE GOT TO GET IT OUT OF THE HULK'S REACH!
"BUT, I HAD NOT COUNTED ON THE HULK'S ALMOST-MIRACULOUS ABILITY TO BOUNCE BACK FROM A FALL ...!"
HOLD IT, THUNDER GOD! YOU'RE NOT GOIN' ANY-WHERE...!
...UNLESS I SEND YOU THERE!
KA-POW!

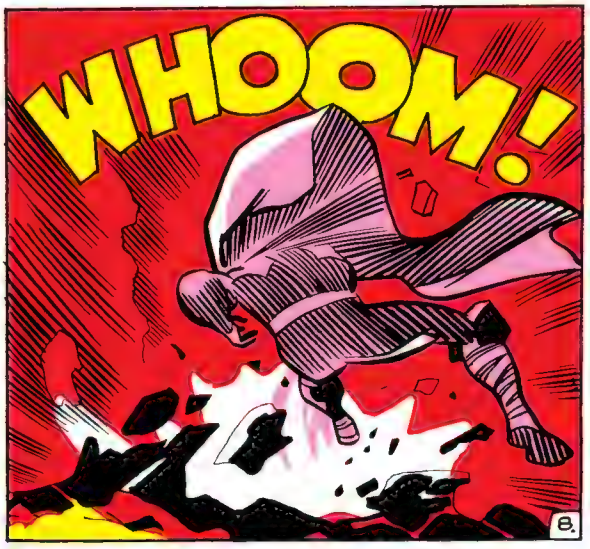
YOU HAVE FLOORED THE SON OF ODIN! I CANNOT REMEMBER THE LAST TIME SUCH A FEAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED!
HE HAS NOT TAKEN HIS EYES FROM MY HAMMER! STILL HE HOPES TO DESTROY IT! I MUST MOVE WITH BLINDING SPEED!

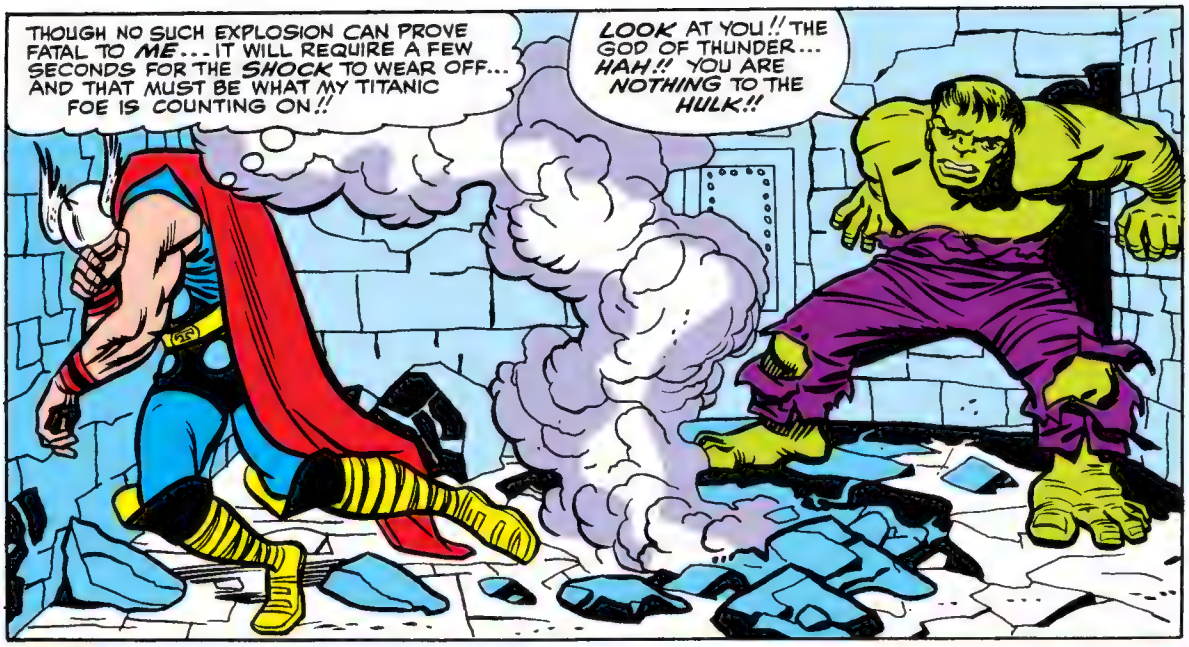
THOUGH THERE MAY BE SOME QUESTION ABOUT WHICH OF US IS THE STRONGER... THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT AS TO WHO HAS THE GREATER SPEED!

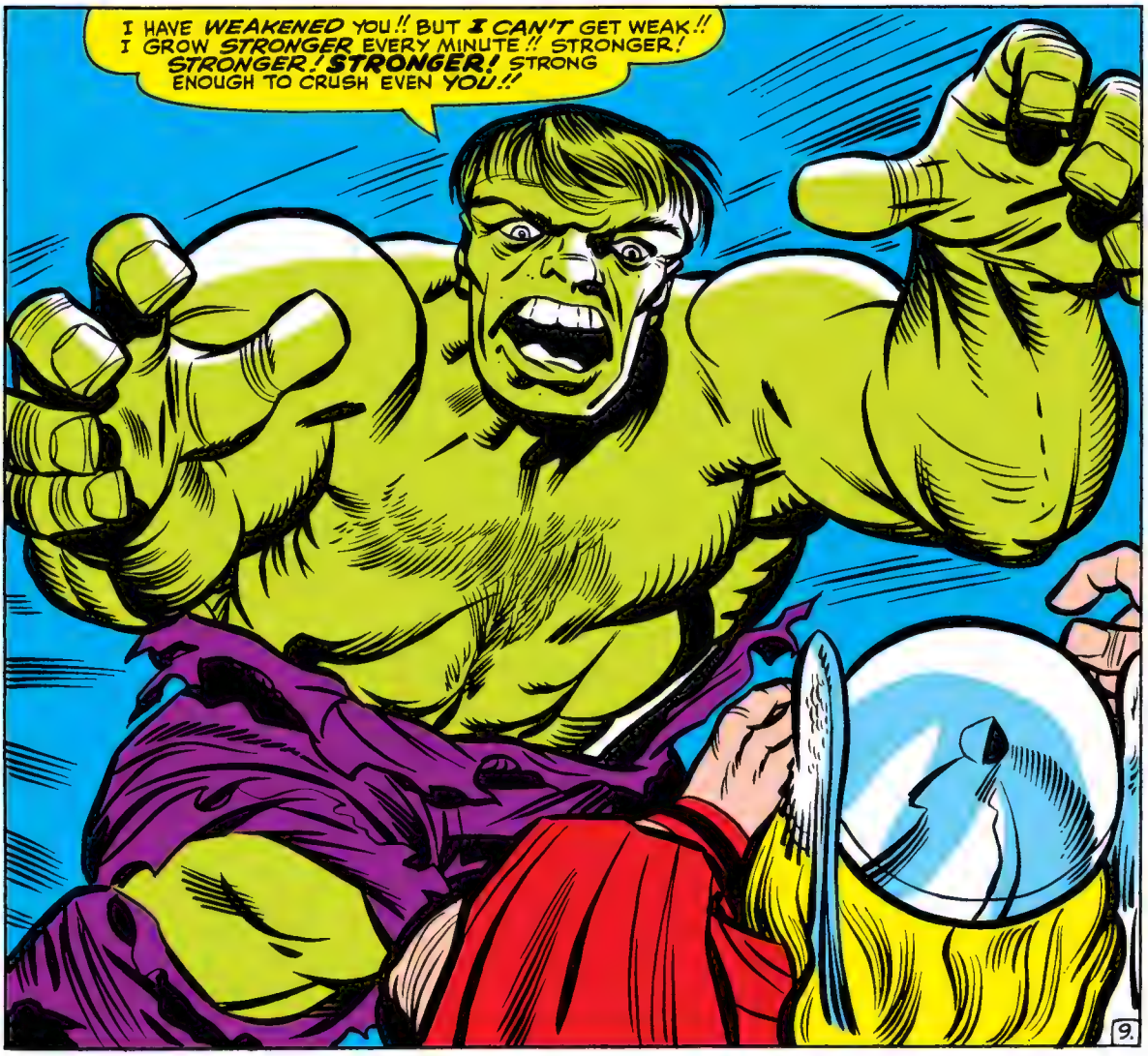

AND NOW, GARGANTUAN ONE... I HAVE SHEATHED MY HAMMER! THE ONLY WAY YOU CAN SEIZE IT IS BY DEFEATING ME!


I CAN DEFEAT ANYTHING THAT LIVES!! I AM THE HULK!
HE IS TEARING THAT LONG-HIDDEN WORLD WAR II MINE FROM ITS CACHE WITHIN THE WALL! HIS FINGERS ARE LIKE TEN IRON CROWBARS!

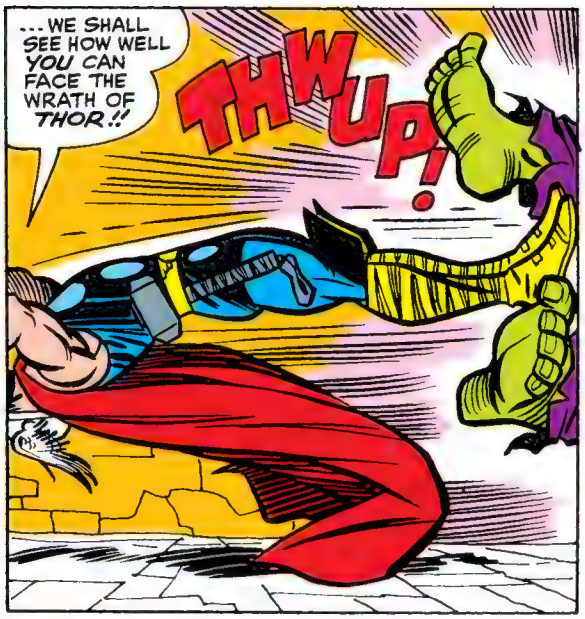

HERE, GOD OF THUNDER!! HERE'S SOME MAN-MADE THUNDER FOR YOU!!
HIS LIVID RAGE... HIS INDESCRIBABLE FURY IS BEYOND COMPREHENSION!! NEVER HAVE I SEEN SUCH POWER IN MORTAL LIMBS!!

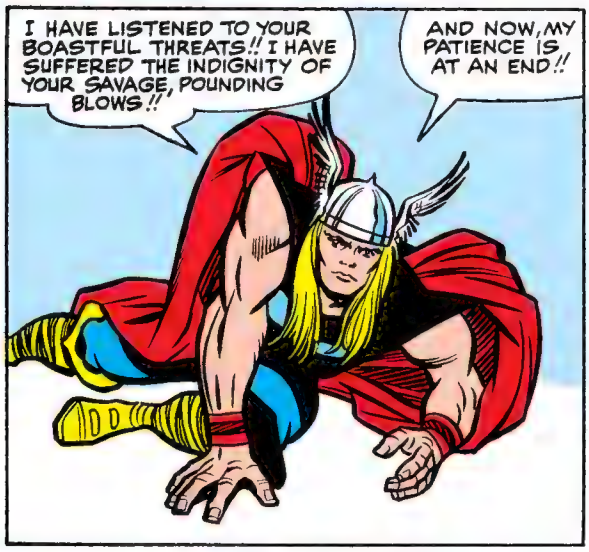

WHOOM!

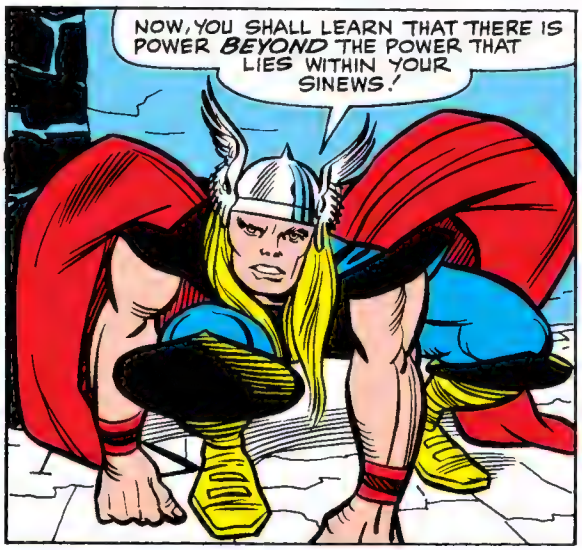

THOUGH NO SUCH EXPLOSION CAN PROVE FATAL TO ME... IT WILL REQUIRE A FEW SECONDS FOR THE SHOCK TO WEAR OFF... AND THAT MUST BE WHAT MY TITANIC FOE IS COUNTING ON!!
LOOK AT YOU!! THE GOD OF THUNDER... HAH!! YOU ARE NOTHING TO THE HULK!!

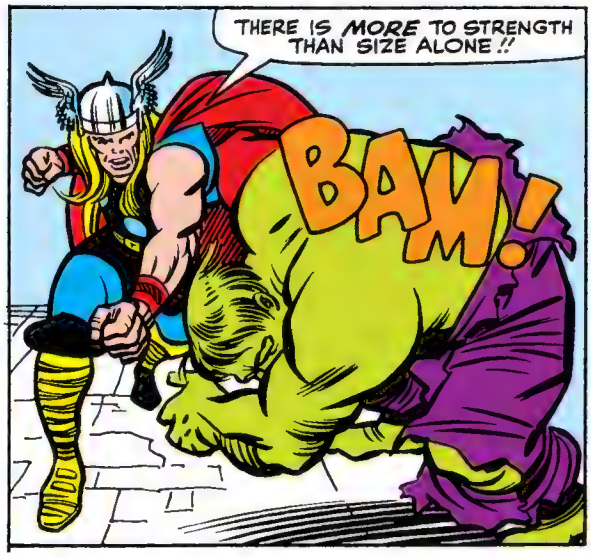

I HAVE WEAKENED YOU!! BUT I CAN'T GET WEAK!! I GROW STRONGER EVERY MINUTE!! STRONGER! STRONGER! STRONGER! STRONG ENOUGH TO CRUSH EVEN YOU!!
9.

IT'LL TAKE JUST ONE BLOW TO... HUH??! WHERE DID HE GO??
ZIZZ
I HAVE EVADED YOUR BLOW, VIOLENT ONE! AND NOW...

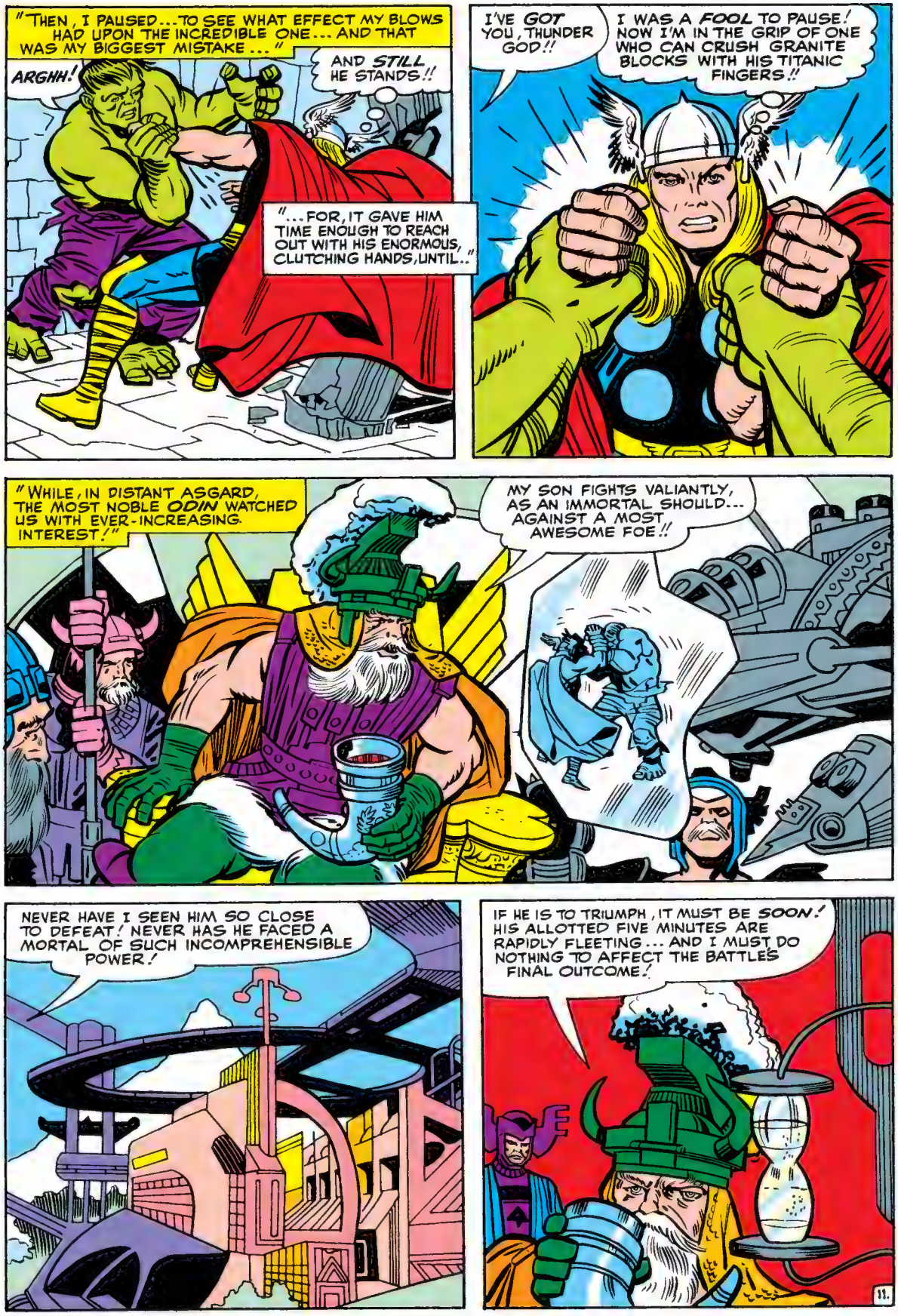

...WE SHALL SEE HOW WELL YOU CAN FACE THE WRATH OF THOR!!
THWUP!


I HAVE LISTENED TO YOUR BOASTFUL THREATS!! I HAVE SUFFERED THE INDIGNITY OF YOUR SAVAGE, POUNDING BLOWS!!
AND NOW, MY PATIENCE IS AT AN END!!

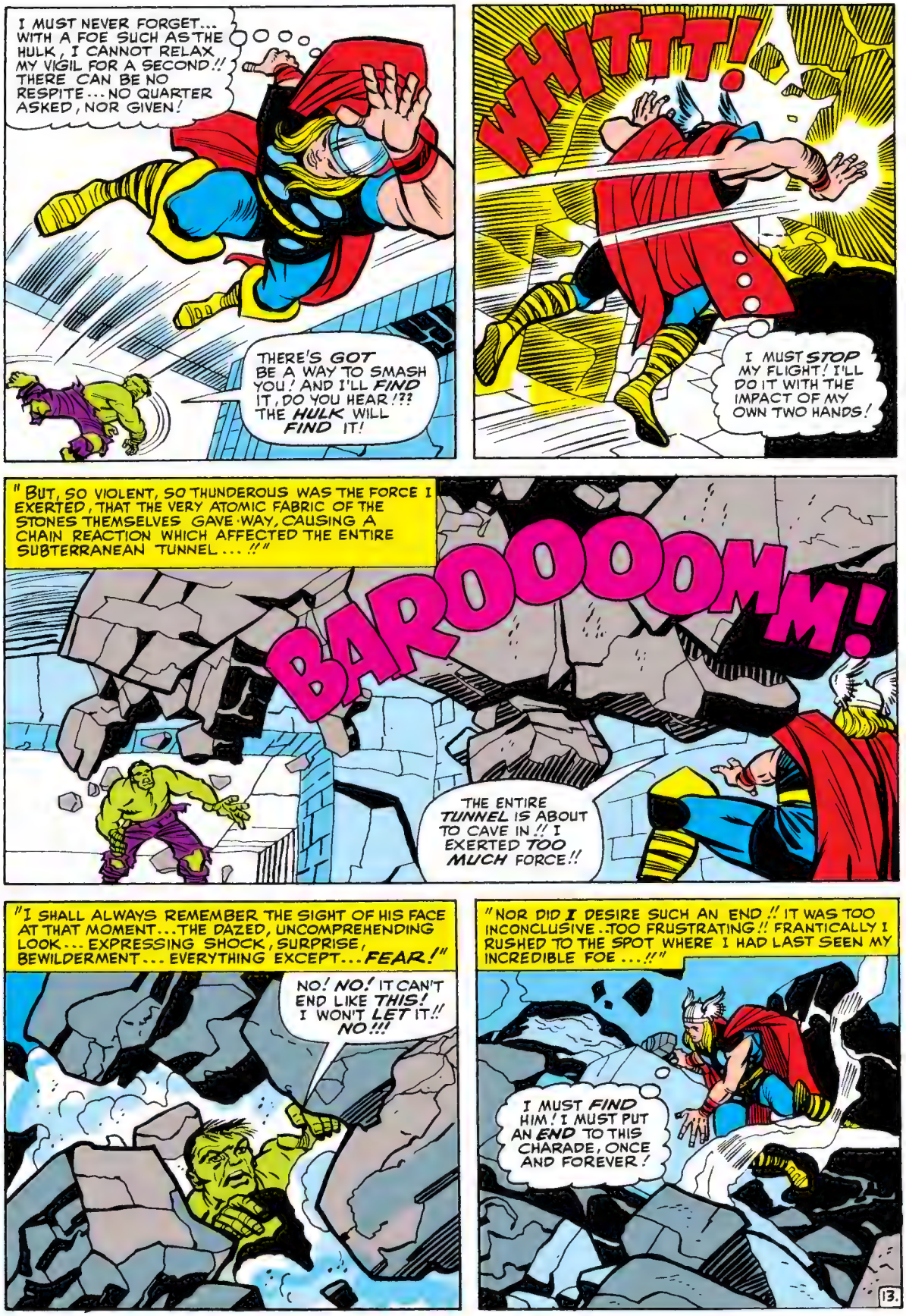

NOW, YOU SHALL LEARN THAT THERE IS POWER BEYOND THE POWER THAT LIES WITHIN YOUR SINEWS!

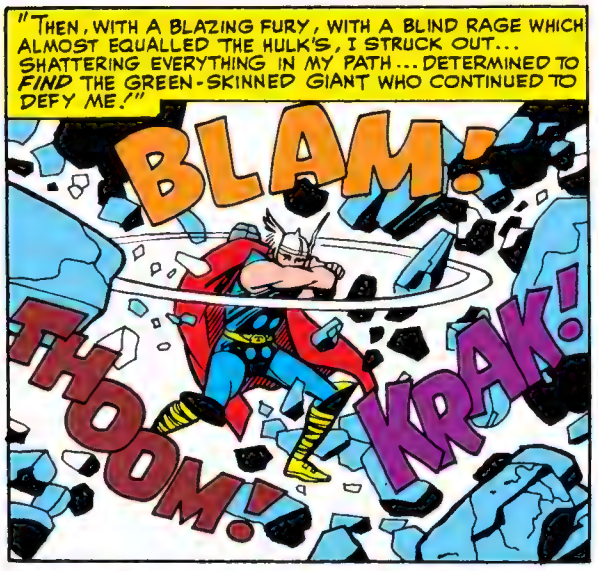

THERE IS MORE TO STRENGTH THAN SIZE ALONE!!
BAM!

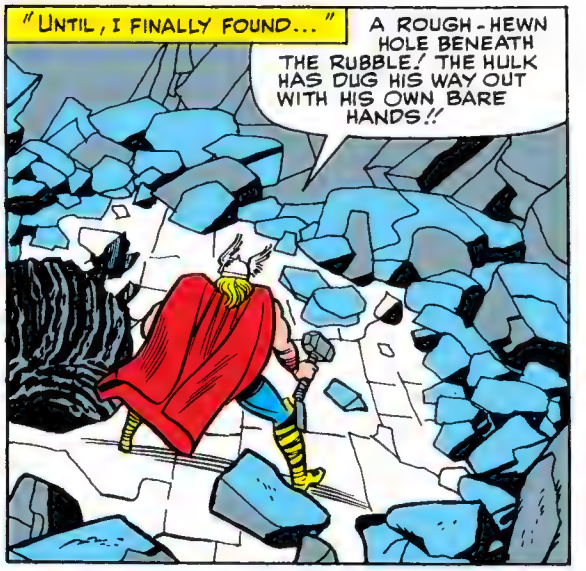
"AGAIN AND AGAIN MY OWN THUNDERING FIST LASHED OUT, BATTERING THE DAZED, ROARING GIANT WHO HAD NEVER BEFORE FELT SUCH MIGHTY, PUNISHING BLOWS!!"
WHOOM!

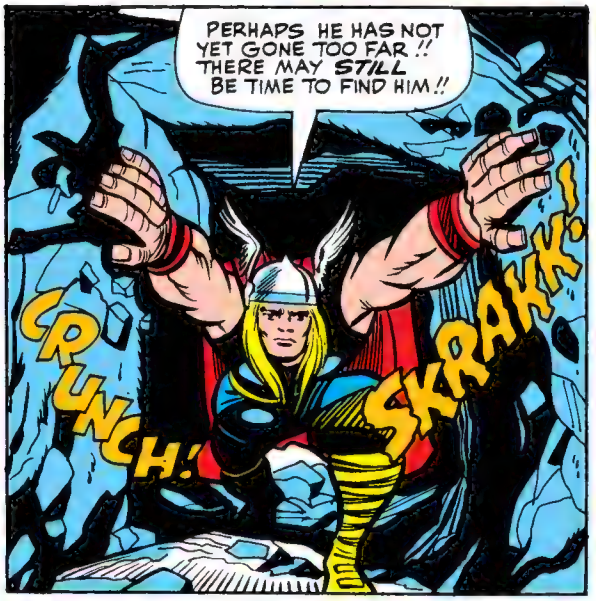

"THEN, I PAUSED...TO SEE WHAT EFFECT MY BLOWS HAD UPON THE INCREDIBLE ONE... AND THAT WAS MY BIGGEST MISTAKE..."
ARGHH!
AND STILL HE STANDS!!
"...FOR, IT GAVE HIM TIME ENOUGH TO REACH OUT WITH HIS ENORMOUS, CLUTCHING HANDS, UNTIL.."
I'VE GOT YOU, THUNDER GOD!!
I WAS A FOOL TO PAUSE! NOW I'M IN THE GRIP OF ONE WHO CAN CRUSH GRANITE BLOCKS WITH HIS TITANIC FINGERS!!
"WHILE, IN DISTANT ASGARD, THE MOST NOBLE ODIN WATCHED US WITH EVER-INCREASING INTEREST!"
MY SON FIGHTS VALIANTLY, AS AN IMMORTAL SHOULD... AGAINST A MOST AWESOME FOE!!
NEVER HAVE I SEEN HIM SO CLOSE TO DEFEAT! NEVER HAS HE FACED A MORTAL OF SUCH INCOMPREHENSIBLE POWER!
IF HE IS TO TRIUMPH, IT MUST BE SOON! HIS ALLOTTED FIVE MINUTES ARE RAPIDLY FLEETING... AND I MUST DO NOTHING TO AFFECT THE BATTLE'S FINAL OUTCOME!
11.

HAH!! FEEL THE POWER OF THE HULK!! DOWN... BOW DOWN TO YOUR MASTER!!
THOR BOWS TO NO ONE!! I SHALL SHOW YOU NOW WHAT STRENGTH REALLY IS!!
NO! NO! IT CAN'T BE!! YOU CAN'T LIFT ME OFF MY FEET! I'M BIGGER THAN YOU!... I'M THE HULK!!
I KNOW WHO YOU ARE!! I'VE KNOWN MANY LIKE YOU, THROUGHOUT THE AGES!! THOUGH THE NAMES MAY CHANGE.. THE POWER AND THE FURY ARE ALWAYS PRESENT!!
...THE BLIND, SENSELESS RAGE...THE NEED TO LASH OUT...TO STRIKE AND DESTROY... THE BELIEF THAT YOUR RAW POWER CAN SMASH ANY OBSTACLE... I KNOW YOU, HULK! I'VE, ALWAYS KNOWN YOUR BREED!
"SUDDENLY, I REALIZED MY FIVE MINUTES HAD ALMOST EXPIRED! THE UNEXPECTED THOUGHT CAUSED ME TO RELAX MY MUSCLES INVOLUNTARILY... AND, IN THAT SPLIT-SECOND, THE HULK PLUMMETTED DOWN AGAIN!!"
NOW THERE'LL BE NO MORE WORDS!!
UHHH...!!
12.


I MUST NEVER FORGET... WITH A FOE SUCH AS THE HULK, I CANNOT RELAX MY VIGIL FOR A SECOND!! THERE CAN BE NO RESPITE... NO QUARTER ASKED, NOR GIVEN!
THERE'S GOT BE A WAY TO SMASH YOU! AND I'LL FIND IT, DO YOU HEAR!?? THE HULK WILL FIND IT!
HHITTT!
I MUST STOP MY FLIGHT! I'LL DO IT WITH THE IMPACT OF MY OWN TWO HANDS!
"BUT, SO VIOLENT, SO THUNDEROUS WAS THE FORCE I EXERTED, THAT THE VERY ATOMIC FABRIC OF THE STONES THEMSELVES GAVE WAY, CAUSING A CHAIN REACTION WHICH AFFECTED THE ENTIRE SUBTERRANEAN TUNNEL... !!"
BAROOOOOMM!
THE ENTIRE TUNNEL IS ABOUT TO CAVE IN!! I EXERTED TOO MUCH FORCE!!
"I SHALL ALWAYS REMEMBER THE SIGHT OF HIS FACE AT THAT MOMENT... THE DAZED, UNCOMPREHENDING LOOK... EXPRESSING SHOCK, SURPRISE, BEWILDERMENT... EVERYTHING EXCEPT... FEAR!"
NO! NO! IT CAN'T END LIKE THIS! I WON'T LET IT!! NO!!!
"NOR DID I DESIRE SUCH AN END!! IT WAS TOO INCONCLUSIVE..TOO FRUSTRATING!! FRANTICALLY I RUSHED TO THE SPOT WHERE I HAD LAST SEEN MY INCREDIBLE FOE...!!"
I MUST FIND HIM! I MUST PUT AN END TO THIS CHARADE, ONCE AND FOREVER!
13.

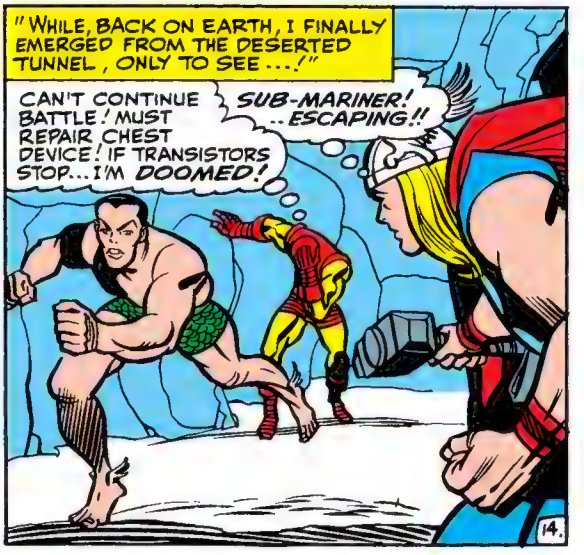

"THEN, WITH A BLAZING FURY, WITH A BLIND RAGE WHICH ALMOST EQUALLED THE HULK'S, I STRUCK OUT... SHATTERING EVERYTHING IN MY PATH... DETERMINED TO FIND THE GREEN-SKINNED GIANT WHO CONTINUED TO DEFY ME!"
BLAM!
THOOM!
KRAK!

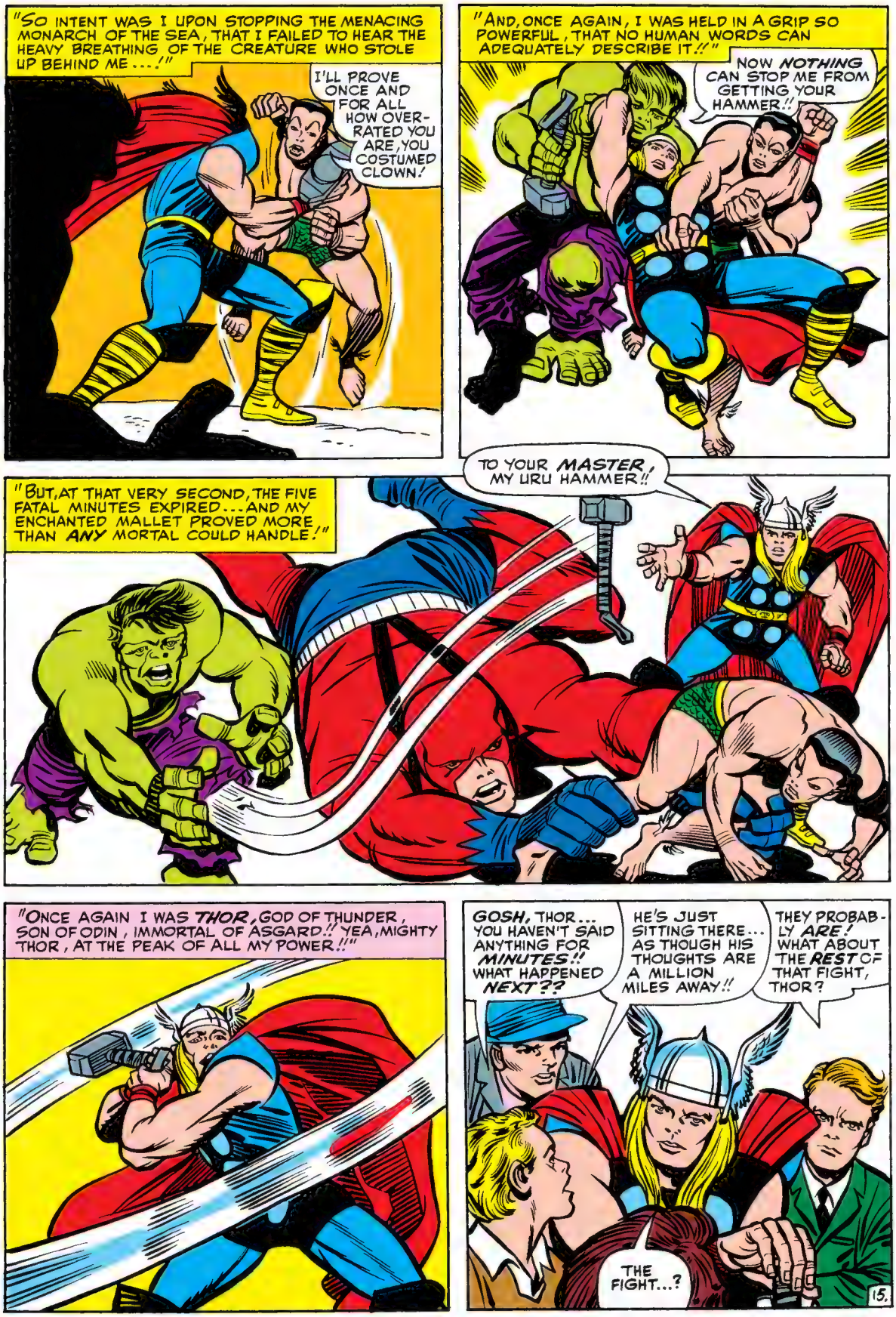

"UNTIL, I FINALLY FOUND..."
A ROUGH-HEWN HOLE BENEATH THE RUBBLE! THE HULK HAS DUG HIS WAY OUT WITH HIS OWN BARE HANDS!!


PERHAPS HE HAS NOT YET GONE TOO FAR!! THERE MAY STILL BE TIME TO FIND HIM!!
CRUNCH!
SKRAK!

"AND, AT THAT MOMENT..."
ONLY SCANT SECONDS REMAIN!
AND I CANNOT GIVE MY SON MORE TIME THAN THE AMOUNT HE REQUESTED!

I HAVE WITNESSED ENOUGH! THERE SHALL BE NO FINAL DECISION THIS DAY!
BUT, ONE GOOD PURPOSE SHALL HAVE BEEN SERVED! THE GOD OF THUNDER WILL, FROM THIS MOMENT FORTH, HAVE GREATER KNOWLEDGE OF THE MEANING OF... HUMILITY!


"WHILE, BACK ON EARTH, I FINALLY EMERGED FROM THE DESERTED TUNNEL, ONLY TO SEE...!"
CAN'T CONTINUE BATTLE! MUST REPAIR CHEST DEVICE! IF TRANSISTORS STOP... I'M DOOMED!
SUB-MARINER! .. ESCAPING!!


"So intent was I upon stopping the menacing monarch of the sea, that I failed to hear the heavy breathing of the creature who stole up behind me...!"
I'll prove once and for all how over-rated you are, you costumed clown!
"And, once again, I was held in a grip so powerful, that no human words can adequately describe it!!"
Now NOTHING can stop me from getting your hammer!!
"But, at that very second, the five fatal minutes expired...and my enchanted mallet proved more than ANY mortal could handle!"
TO YOUR MASTER, MY URU HAMMER!!
"Once again I was THOR, God of Thunder, son of Odin, immortal of Asgard!! Yea, mighty Thor, at the peak of all my power!!"
GOSH, THOR... YOU HAVEN'T SAID ANYTHING FOR MINUTES!! WHAT HAPPENED NEXT??
HE'S JUST SITTING THERE... AS THOUGH HIS THOUGHTS ARE A MILLION MILES AWAY!!
THEY PROBABLY ARE! WHAT ABOUT THE REST OF THAT FIGHT, THOR?
THE FIGHT...?
15.

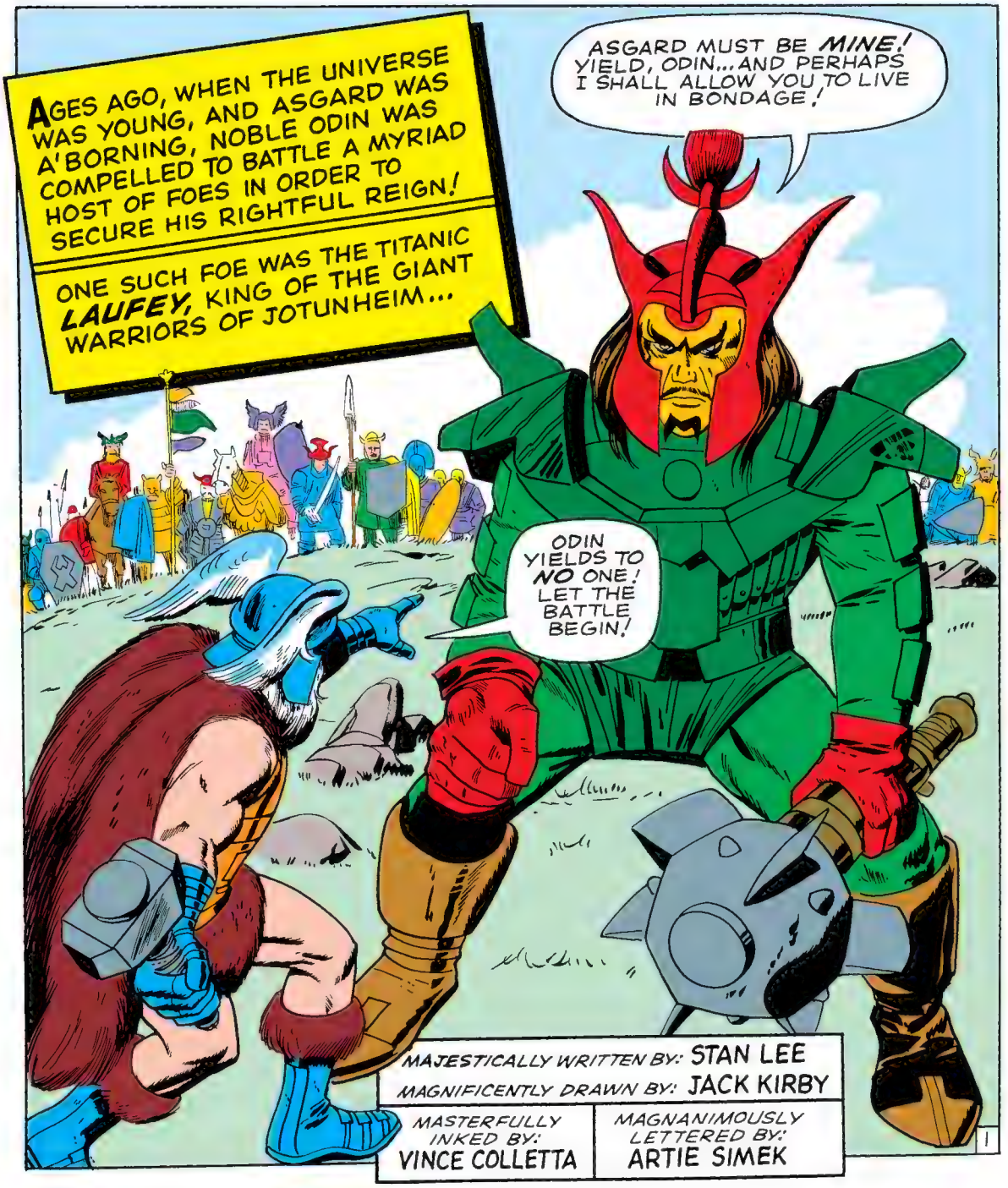
THERE IS NOTHING MORE TO TELL...!
THE HULK SEEMS TO HAVE VANISHED! I FOUND NO FURTHER TRACE OF HIM, UNTIL... BUT, THAT IS ANOTHER TALE!
BUT, YOU STILL HAVEN'T TOLD US... WHO'S THE STRONGEST!
I CAN ONLY GUESS AT THE ANSWER... BUT I CAN OFFER NO PROOF!
THEREFORE, I SHALL SAY NOTHING! FOR THE GOD OF THUNDER DOES NOT SCATTER HIS WORDS RASHLY TO THE WIND!
BUT, I LEAVE YOU WITH THIS THOUGHT... IT IS NOT THE ONE POSSESSING THE GREATEST POWER WHO IS IMPORTANT!! IT IS THE ONE WHO USES HIS POWER WISELY... IN THE CAUSE OF JUSTICE!
FOR, THE LESSON I HAVE LEARNED IS ONE I SHALL NEVER FORGET! STRENGTH ALONE IS MEANINGLESS! WITHOUT VIRTUE, IT IS AN EMPTY SHELL!
I PRAY THE HULK SOMEDAY LEARNS THAT LESSON... WHEREVER HE MAY BE!
AND, DAYS LATER, IN A LONELY DESERT AREA OF THE GREAT SOUTHWEST, THE STRONGEST MORTAL CREATURE ON EARTH SHUFFLES FORTH, LOST IN HIS OWN DARK, CLOUDED THOUGHTS...!
I MUST FIND THOR SOMEDAY! AND I MUST CRUSH HIM!! AS ONLY I CAN!
BUT, WHERE THE THUNDER GOD IS GENTLE, THE HULK IS SAVAGE! WHERE THOR IS THOUGHTFUL, THE HULK IS FILLED WITH FRENZY!
NOTHING CAN STAND IN MY WAY! NOTHING CAN DEFY MY MIGHT!
ONLY IN ONE WAY ARE THEY SIMILAR... THE POWER OF EACH IS BEYOND DESCRIPTION... BEYOND MERE HUMAN COMPREHENSION!!
SOMEDAY WE'LL MEET AGAIN... AND THOR WILL BE SMASHED... FOREVER!
AND, IN TRUTH, THEY SHALL MEET AGAIN! PERHAPS NOT THIS MONTH... PERHAPS NOT NEXT... BUT, MEET THEY SHALL! AND, WHEN THAT EPIC CONFRONTATION TAKES PLACE, WE SHALL BRING YOU EVERY PULSE-POUNDING INCIDENT... AS YOU HAVE COME TO EXPECT IN THIS, THE MARVEL AGE OF COMICS!!
16.

REMEMBER: THE INCREDIBLE HULK THRILLS YOU EACH MONTH IN MIGHTY MARVEL'S TALES TO ASTONISH!!

THE START OF A NEW MARVEL BIOGRAPHY-IN-DEPTH...

Tales of ASGARD HOME OF THE MIGHTY NORSE GODS!

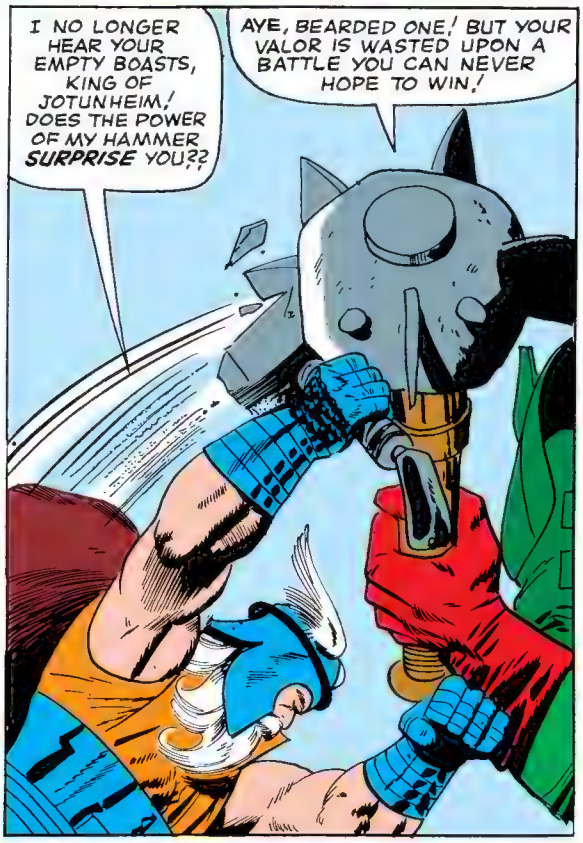
"THE COMING OF LOKI!"


AGES AGO, WHEN THE UNIVERSE WAS YOUNG, AND ASGARD WAS A'BORNING, NOBLE ODIN WAS COMPELLED TO BATTLE A MYRIAD HOST OF FOES IN ORDER TO SECURE HIS RIGHTFUL REIGN!
ONE SUCH FOE WAS THE TITANIC LAUFEY, KING OF THE GIANT WARRIORS OF JOTUNHEIM...
ASGARD MUST BE MINE! YIELD, ODIN... AND PERHAPS I SHALL ALLOW YOU TO LIVE IN BONDAGE!
ODIN YIELDS TO NO ONE! LET THE BATTLE BEGIN!

MAJESTICALLY WRITTEN BY: STAN LEE
MAGNIFICENTLY DRAWN BY: JACK KIRBY
MASTERFULLY INKED BY: VINCE COLLETTA
MAGNANIMOUSLY LETTERED BY: ARTIE SIMEK

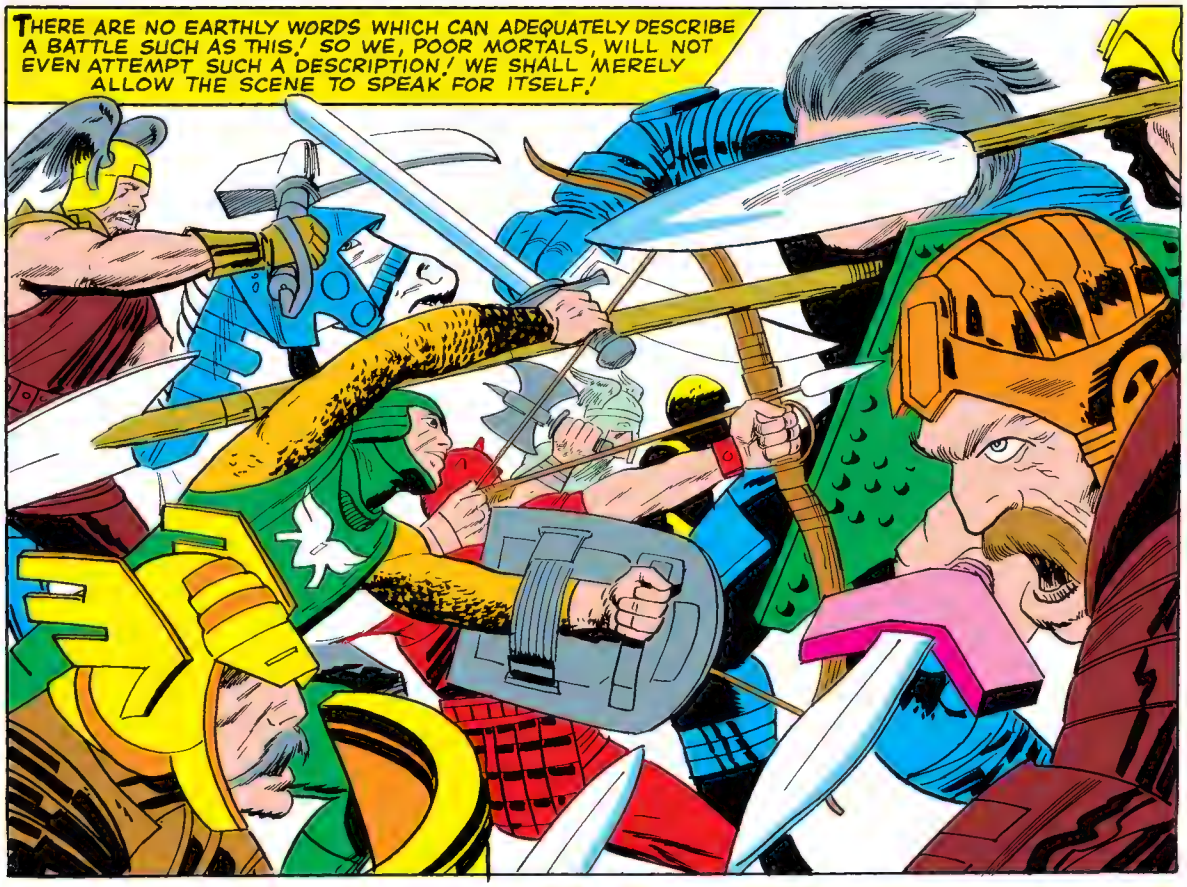
IT WILL TAKE NO MORE THAN ONE BLOW OF MY THUNDERING WAR CLUB TO--HOLD, ODIN! STAND YOUR GROUND AND FIGHT!
I STAND MY GROUND! BUT YOUR MOVEMENTS ARE CLUMSY--YOUR ARM IS SLOW!

HOWEVER, LAUFEY'S POUNDING WAR CLUB EVENTUALLY DOES FIND ITS TARGET, AS DOES ODIN'S LEGENDARY HAMMER--AND THE BATTLE IS ON, AS THE VERY PEAKS OF JOTUNHEIM RING WITH THE SOUND OF THE EPIC DUEL!


I NO LONGER HEAR YOUR EMPTY BOASTS, KING OF JOTUNHEIM! DOES THE POWER OF MY HAMMER SURPRISE YOU??
AYE, BEARDED ONE! BUT YOUR VALOR IS WASTED UPON A BATTLE YOU CAN NEVER HOPE TO WIN!

KNOW YOU, THIS LAND IS MINE! SEE HOW I ALMOST CAUSED YOU TO STEP ON A FATAL POTHOLE WHICH POURS FORTH COSMIC FLAME!
HIS WORDS RING TRUE! IN THIS ALIEN LAND, THE ADVANTAGE IS HIS--UNLESS I CAN ACHIEVE VICTORY WITHIN MINUTES!
2

ENOUGH OF THIS USELESS DUEL! LET THE DECISION BE NOW! HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN, SAVAGE LAUFEY, A HAMMER CAN BE THROWN AS WELL AS SWUNG?!?
MY WAR CLUB-- SHATTERED!
SEEING THEIR MONARCH'S WEAPON SO EASILY DESTROYED, THE GIANT WARRIORS OF JOTUNHEIM BELLOW IN UNCONTROLLABLE RAGE, AS THEY BREAK RANKS, HUNGERING TO JOIN THE BATTLE!
DEATH TO ALL THE MINIONS OF ASGARD! THEY MUST BE CRUSHED FOR THE GLORY OF JOTUNHEIM!
WE CAN REMAIN INACTIVE NO LONGER! OUR WARLORD IS DEFENSELESS! WE MUST FIGHT AT THE SIDE OF LAUFEY!
STRIKE FOR JOTUNHEIM! SLAY THE WARRIORS OF ASGARD!
THEN, SOUNDING THEIR EAR-SHATTERING WAR CRY, PLACING A POWERFUL BATTLE-SWORD IN THE EAGER HAND OF LAUFEY, THE ENTIRE ASSEMBLED FIGHTING FORCE OF JOTUNHEIM SURGES FORWARD LIKE AN IRRESISTIBLE LIVING TIDAL WAVE....!
YOUR SWORD, MY KING! MAY IT POINT THE WAY TO VICTORY!
TO MY SIDE, WARRIORS OF ASGARD! LET THE STRENGTH OF OUR LIMBS, THE POWER OF OUR ARMS, DRIVE BACK THE HORDES OF LAUFEY!
3


THERE ARE NO EARTHLY WORDS WHICH CAN ADEQUATELY DESCRIBE A BATTLE SUCH AS THIS! SO WE, POOR MORTALS, WILL NOT EVEN ATTEMPT SUCH A DESCRIPTION! WE SHALL MERELY ALLOW THE SCENE TO SPEAK FOR ITSELF!

TO FOES SUCH AS THESE-- IN A CONFLICT SUCH AS THIS-TIME HAS LITTLE OR NO MEANING! IT MIGHT BE MINUTES, HOURS, OR DAYS--BUT FINALLY, THE COURAGE AND THE SKILL OF ODIN'S LEGIONS SERVE TO DRIVE BACK LAUFEY'S BEATEN WARRIORS, IN ONE OF THE GREATEST VICTORIES IN THE ANNALS OF ASGARD!
FLEE! WE CAN FIGHT NO LONGER! THE CAUSE IS LOST! ODIN HAS TRIUMPHED AGAIN!
NO! I ORDER DEATH TO THOSE WHO SURRENDER! WE SHALL REGROUP AT MY CASTLE, AND ATTACK AGAIN--WHEN THEY LEAST SUSPECT IT!

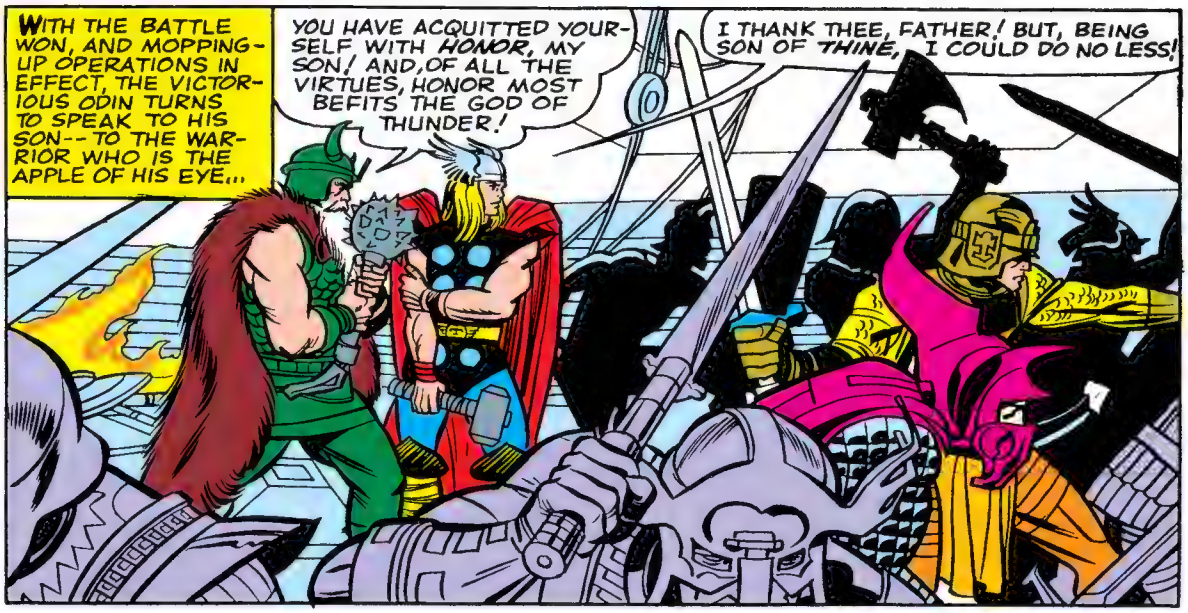
BUT ODIN, EVER VIGILANT, EVER OMNIPOTENT, HAS HEARD LAUFEY'S DESPERATE CRY, AND SO A NEW ORDER IS ISSUED BY THE MIGHTY MONARCH...!
AFTER THEM! THE REIGN OF LAUFEY MUST BE ENDED FOREVER! SO LONG AS HE IS KING OF JOTUNHEIM, OUR VICTORY WILL NEVER BE COMPLETE!
4

BUT, LAUFEY'S COURAGE IS A MATCH FOR HIS AMBITION--AND HE CHOOSES DEATH AT THE HANDS OF HIS ENEMY RATHER THAN THE IGNOMINY OF SURRENDER!
ENOUGH! LET THE FIGHTING CEASE! THE WARLORD OF JOTUNHEIM IS SLAIN!
SOMETHING LIVES WITHIN THAT BUNDLE! OPEN IT, THAT I MAY BEHOLD ITS CONTENT!
I HEAR A FAINT WHIMPERING CRY! METHINKS, MY LORD, THERE IS AN INFANT CHILD WITHIN!
OF COURSE! IT IS LOKI, SON OF LAUFEY! THE CHILD HE KEPT HIDDEN, FOR HIS HEART WAS FILLED WITH SHAME THAT LOKI WAS NOT BORN A GIANT, AS WERE THE OTHER OFFSPRING OF JOTUNHEIM!
LOKI! THE VERY NAME HAS A RING OF EVIL--A TINGE OF FOREBODING TO IT!
MAYHAP! BUT STILL HE IS A REGAL PRINCE, SON OF A KINGLY FATHER! I MUST ACCORD HIM HIS RIGHTFUL DUE!
HEAR ME, LEGIONS OF ASGARD! FROM THIS MOMENT HENCE, I PROCLAIM LOKI: SON OF ODIN, HALF-BROTHER TO MY WELL-BELOVED THOR! FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE, LOKI IS FOREVERMORE AN IMMORTAL OF ASGARD! THIS HAVE I PROCLAIMED! SO BE IT!
MANY ARE THE LEGENDS OF LOKI'S BIRTH--BUT THIS IS ONE WE FAVOR! HOWEVER, WE HAVE MERELY SCRATCHED THE SURFACE--WE HAVE BARELY BEGUN THIS DRAMATIC BIOGRAPHY-IN-DEPTH! IN FORTHCOMING ISSUES, WE SHALL TRACE LOKI'S EARLY CHILDHOOD--AND YOU SHALL RELIVE THE LEGENDARY PAST WITH LOKI AND WITH US! IN THE WORDS OF NOBLE ODIN--SO BE IT!
THE END

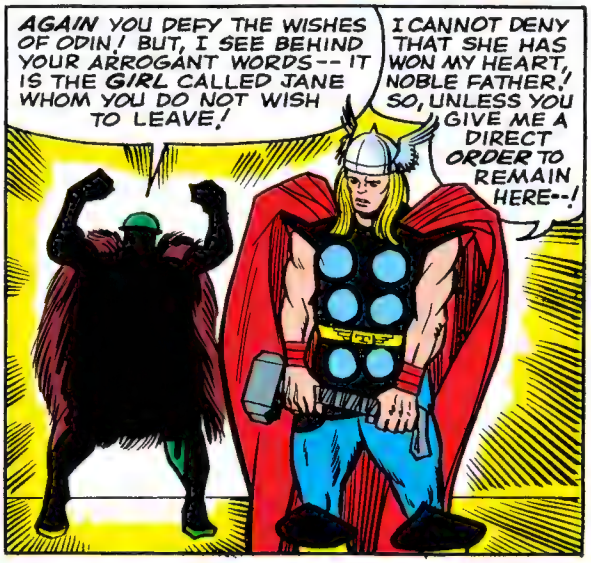
JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY
WITH
THE MIGHTY
THOR
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
IND.
MARVEL COMICS GROUP 12¢
113 FEB
MIGHTIER THAN EVER!
AT LAST! THE THUNDER GOD REVEALS HIS TRUE IDENTITY TO JANE
BUT WAIT'LL YOU SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN HE DOES!!!

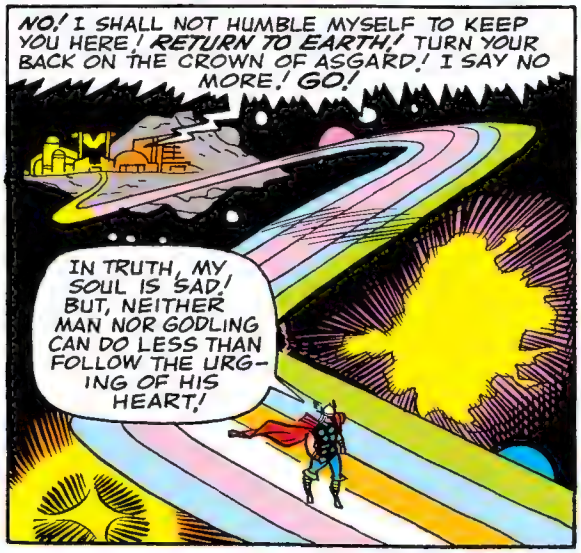
"A WORLD GONE MAD!"
STARRING: THE MIGHTY THOR
WHEN IMPERIOUS ODIN COMMANDS, THOR MUST OBEY! THUS, WE FIND HIM ABOARD A GIANT ASGARD SKY SHIP, LENDING HIS OWN AWESOME MIGHT TO THE BATTLE AGAINST THE DEMON MEN OF JOTUNHEIM! (THIS DOESN'T HAVE TOO MUCH TO DO WITH THE MAIN PART OF OUR STORY, BUT YOU'VE GOT TO ADMIT IT MAKES A SPECTACULAR BEGINNING!)
A TALE TOLD WITH GUSTO BY: STAN LEE
A DRAMA DRAWN WITH GRANDEUR BY: JACK KIRBY
AN IDYLL INKED WITH GALLANTRY BY: CHIC STONE
A LEGEND LETTERED WITH GLEE BY: ARTIE SIMEK
1

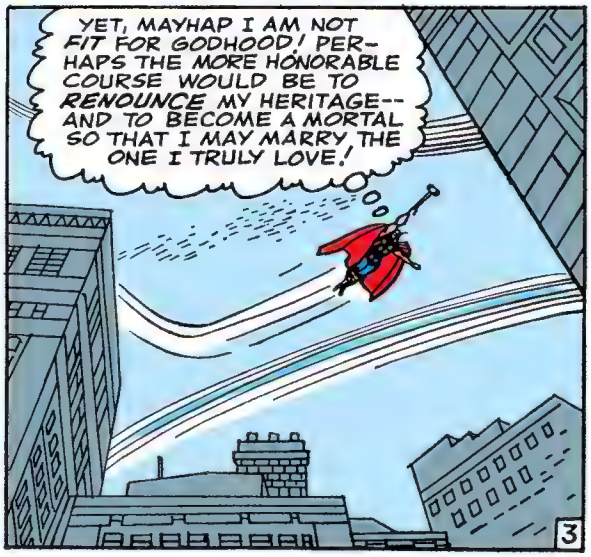
WE PROMISED OL' JACK KIRBY THAT WE'D LET HIM GET A FEW OF THESE EYE-OPENING BATTLE SCENES OUT OF HIS SYSTEM, SO HERE THEY ARE! GO AHEAD, ENJOY THEM--THERE'S NO EXTRA CHARGE!
FEW SIGHTS ON ASGARD OR EARTH CAN BE AS IMPRESSIVE AS THIS BREATH-TAKING CLOSE-UP OF OMNIPOTENT ODIN AND HIS THUNDER-GOD SON FIGHTING SIDE BY SIDE AGAINST A COMMON FOE!
FOR ASGARD --AND FREEDOM!
AND NOW, ON TO THE NEXT PAGE, WHERE OUR TALE REALLY BEGINS...
2

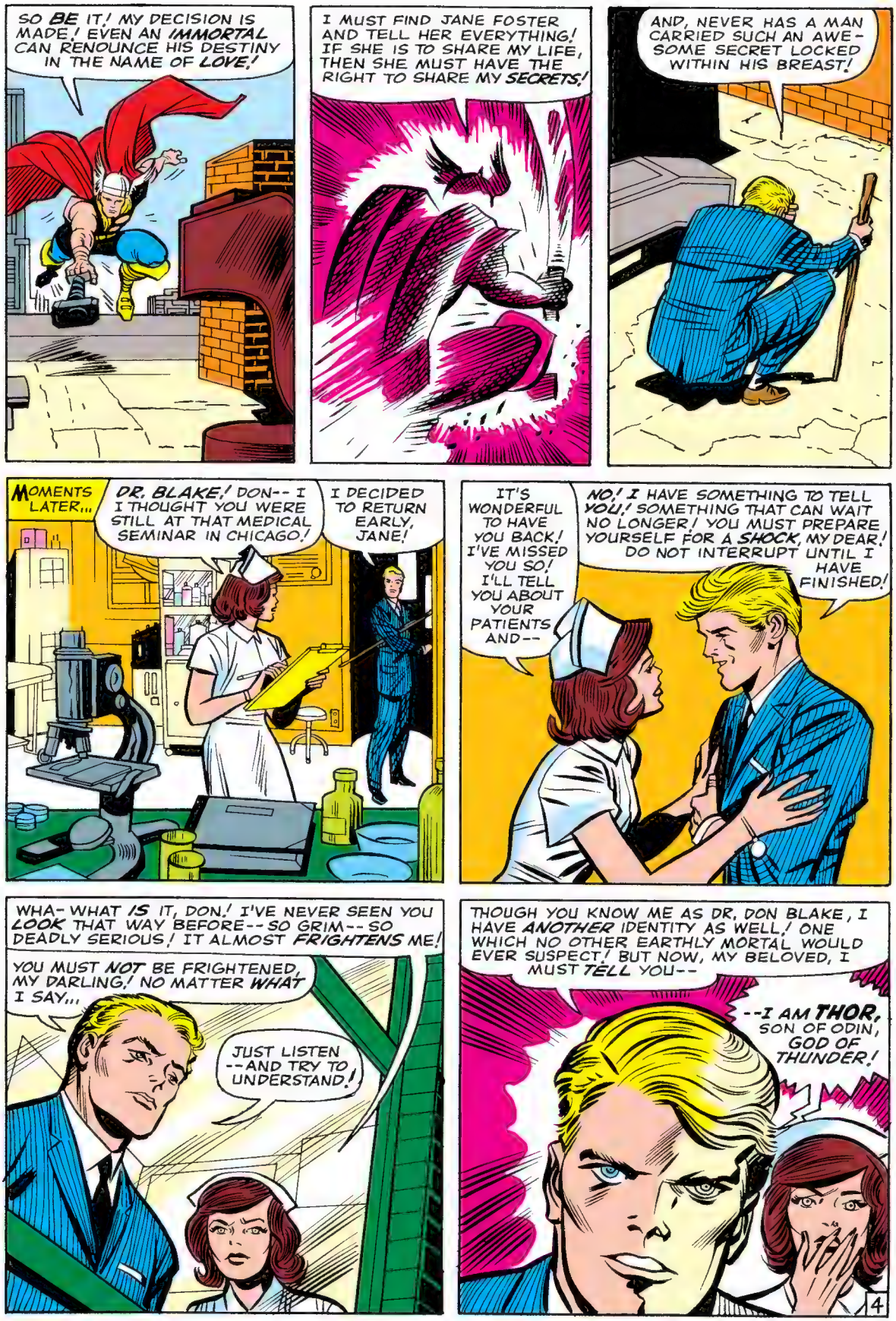

WITH THE BATTLE WON, AND MOPPING-UP OPERATIONS IN EFFECT, THE VICTORIOUS ODIN TURNS TO SPEAK TO HIS SON--TO THE WARRIOR WHO IS THE APPLE OF HIS EYE...
YOU HAVE ACQUITTED YOURSELF WITH HONOR, MY SON! AND, OF ALL THE VIRTUES, HONOR MOST BEFITS THE GOD OF THUNDER!
I THANK THEE, FATHER! BUT, BEING SON OF THINE, I COULD DO NO LESS!

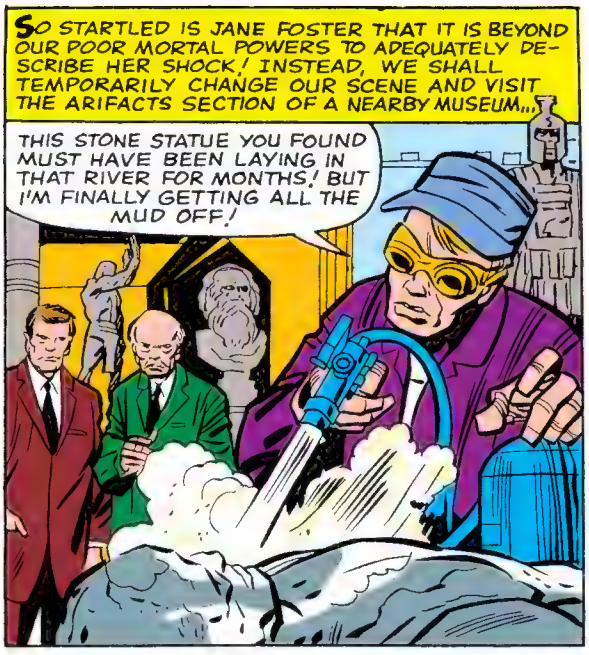
YOU HAVE SPENT MANY LONG MONTHS ON THE PLANET EARTH, VALOROUS ONE! AND NOW, IT IS ODIN'S WISH THAT YOU RETURN TO ASGARD, TO TAKE UP YOUR PRINCELY DUTIES!
NAY, FATHER--I CANNOT! THERE IS MUCH THAT REMAINS TO BE DONE ON THE PLANET OF MORTALS! MY MISSION IS NOT YET FINISHED!


AGAIN YOU DEFY THE WISHES OF ODIN! BUT, I SEE BEHIND YOUR ARROGANT WORDS--IT IS THE GIRL CALLED JANE WHOM YOU DO NOT WISH TO LEAVE!
I CANNOT DENY THAT SHE HAS WON MY HEART, NOBLE FATHER! SO, UNLESS YOU GIVE ME A DIRECT ORDER TO REMAIN HERE--!

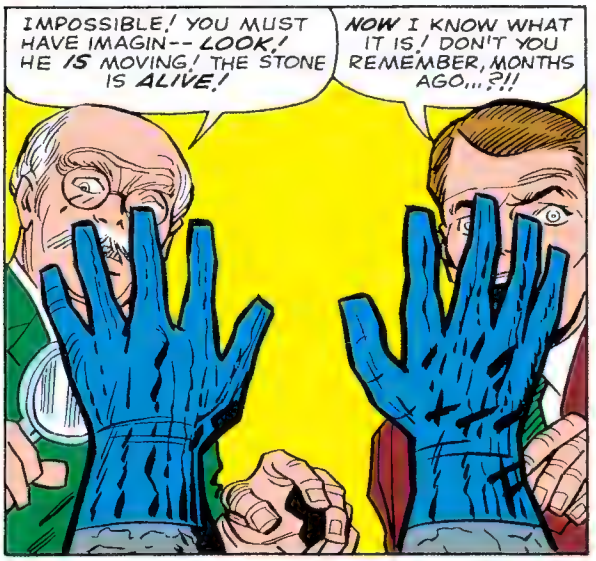

NO! I SHALL NOT HUMBLE MYSELF TO KEEP YOU HERE! RETURN TO EARTH! TURN YOUR BACK ON THE CROWN OF ASGARD! I SAY NO MORE! GO!
IN TRUTH, MY SOUL IS SAD! BUT, NEITHER MAN NOR GODLING CAN DO LESS THAN FOLLOW THE URGING OF HIS HEART!

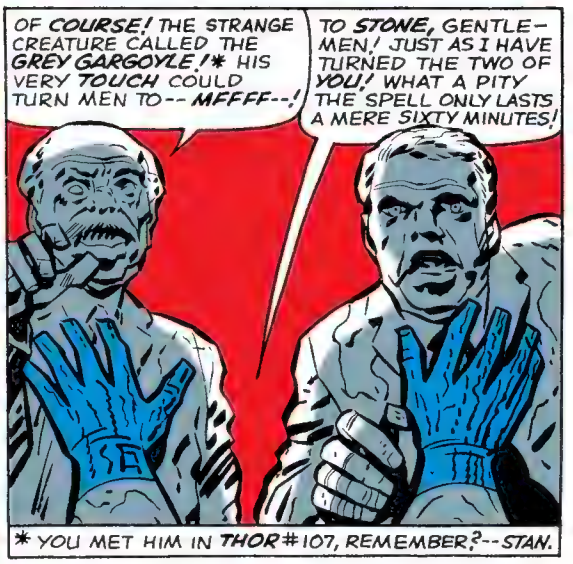

YET, MAYHAP I AM NOT FIT FOR GODHOOD! PERHAPS THE MORE HONORABLE COURSE WOULD BE TO RENOUNCE MY HERITAGE--AND TO BECOME A MORTAL SO THAT I MAY MARRY THE ONE I TRULY LOVE!
3


SO BE IT! MY DECISION IS MADE! EVEN AN IMMORTAL CAN RENOUNCE HIS DESTINY IN THE NAME OF LOVE!
I MUST FIND JANE FOSTER AND TELL HER EVERYTHING! IF SHE IS TO SHARE MY LIFE, THEN SHE MUST HAVE THE RIGHT TO SHARE MY SECRETS!
AND, NEVER HAS A MAN CARRIED SUCH AN AWE-SOME SECRET LOCKED WITHIN HIS BREAST!
MOMENTS LATER...
DR. BLAKE! DON-- I THOUGHT YOU WERE STILL AT THAT MEDICAL SEMINAR IN CHICAGO!
I DECIDED TO RETURN EARLY, JANE!
IT'S WONDERFUL TO HAVE YOU BACK! I'VE MISSED YOU SO! I'LL TELL YOU ABOUT YOUR PATIENTS AND--
NO! I HAVE SOMETHING TO TELL YOU! SOMETHING THAT CAN WAIT NO LONGER! YOU MUST PREPARE YOURSELF FOR A SHOCK, MY DEAR! DO NOT INTERRUPT UNTIL I HAVE FINISHED!
WHA- WHAT IS IT, DON! I'VE NEVER SEEN YOU LOOK THAT WAY BEFORE-- SO GRIM-- SO DEADLY SERIOUS! IT ALMOST FRIGHTENS ME!
YOU MUST NOT BE FRIGHTENED, MY DARLING! NO MATTER WHAT I SAY...
JUST LISTEN --AND TRY TO UNDERSTAND!
THOUGH YOU KNOW ME AS DR. DON BLAKE, I HAVE ANOTHER IDENTITY AS WELL! ONE WHICH NO OTHER EARTHLY MORTAL WOULD EVER SUSPECT! BUT NOW, MY BELOVED, I MUST TELL YOU--
--I AM THOR, SON OF ODIN, GOD OF THUNDER!
4

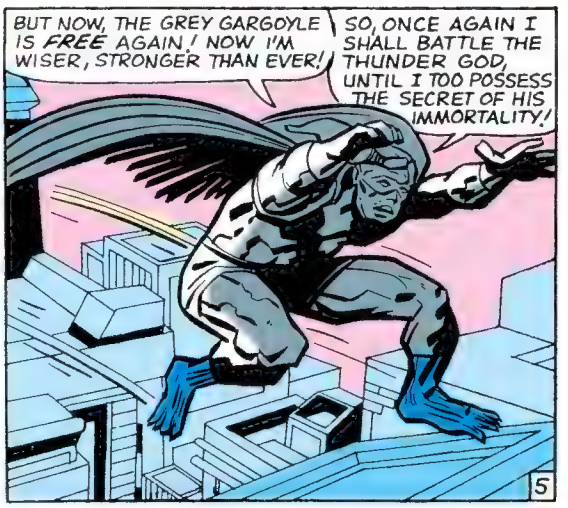

SO STARTLED IS JANE FOSTER THAT IT IS BEYOND OUR POOR MORTAL POWERS TO ADEQUATELY DESCRIBE HER SHOCK! INSTEAD, WE SHALL TEMPORARILY CHANGE OUR SCENE AND VISIT THE ARIFACTS SECTION OF A NEARBY MUSEUM...!
THIS STONE STATUE YOU FOUND MUST HAVE BEEN LAYING IN THAT RIVER FOR MONTHS! BUT I'M FINALLY GETTING ALL THE MUD OFF!

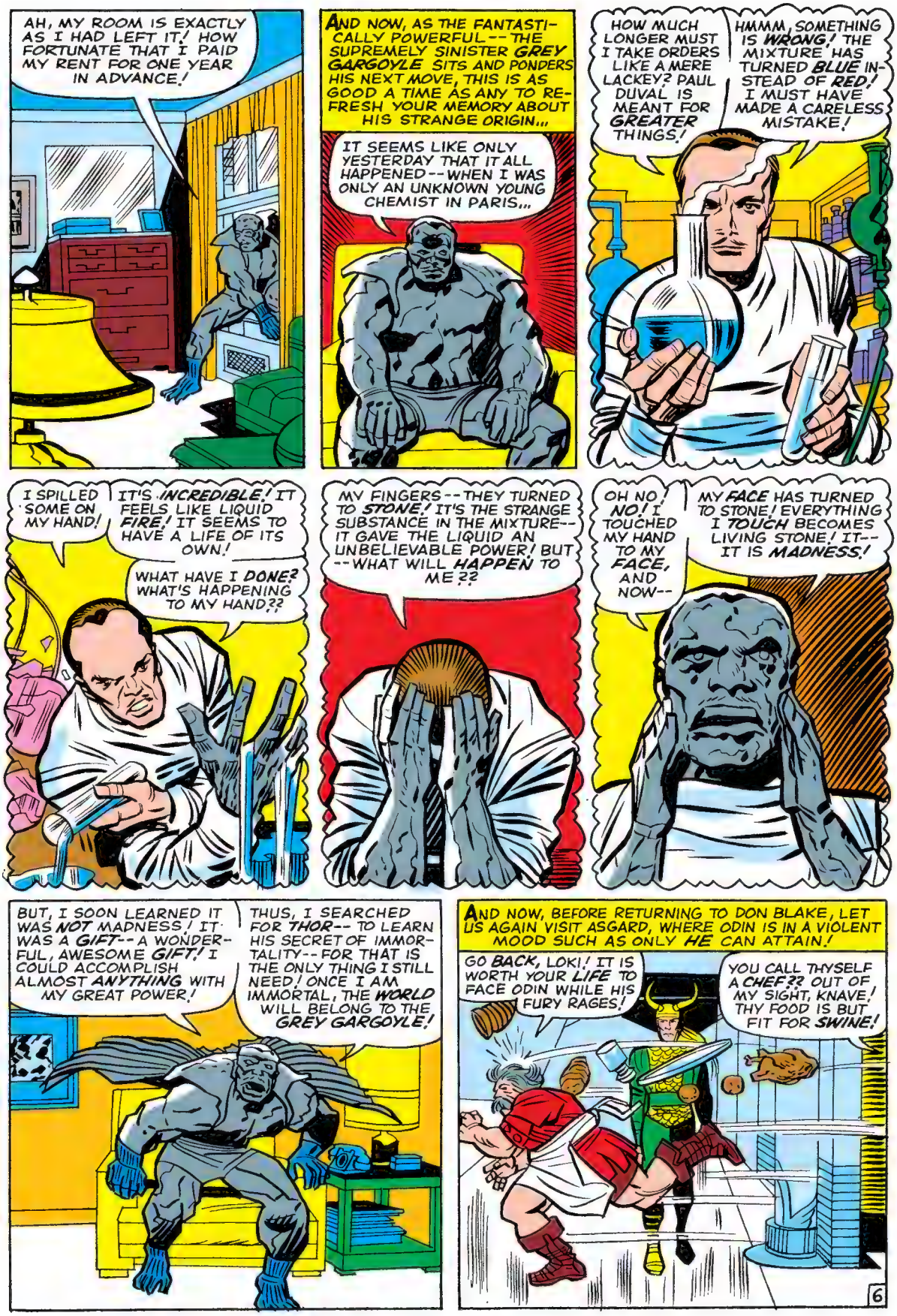
IT COULD BE ONE OF THE GREAT DISCOVERIES OF OUR AGE! I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT! BUT HOW DID IT GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THE HUDSON RIVER?
PERHAPS IT WAS CREATED BY A TRIBE OLDER THAN TIME-- WHEN THE RIVER WAS NO MORE THAN A DRY, ARRID PLAIN! DOCTOR! AM I SEEING THINGS! I COULD HAVE SWORN I SAW ITS SHOULDER TWITCH!


IMPOSSIBLE! YOU MUST HAVE IMAGIN-- LOOK! HE IS MOVING! THE STONE IS ALIVE!
NOW I KNOW WHAT IT IS! DON'T YOU REMEMBER, MONTHS AGO...?!!

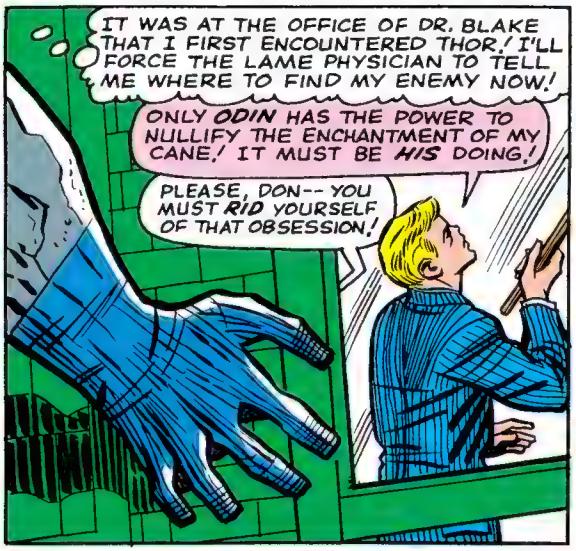

OF COURSE! THE STRANGE CREATURE CALLED THE GREY GARGOYLE!* HIS VERY TOUCH COULD TURN MEN TO-- MFFFF--!
TO STONE, GENTLEMEN! JUST AS I HAVE TURNED THE TWO OF YOU! WHAT A PITY THE SPELL ONLY LASTS A MERE SIXTY MINUTES!
* YOU MET HIM IN THOR #107, REMEMBER?--STAN.

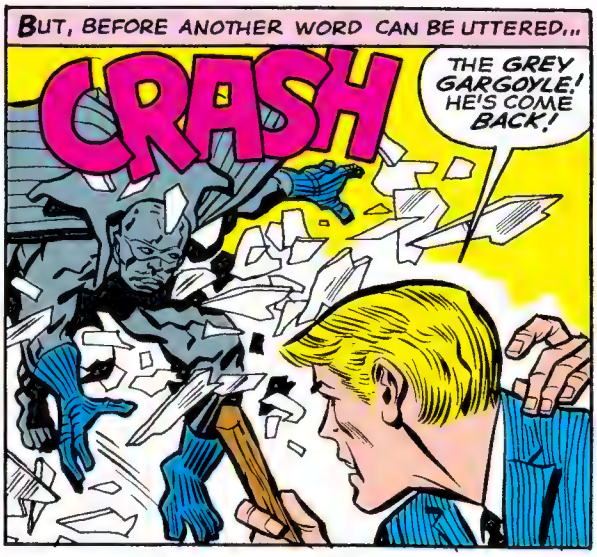
THEY DESERVE BEING STONE MEN FOR AN HOUR -- THE FOOLS! IF THEY HAD NOT DUG ME UP, I WOULD HAVE REMAINED UNDERNEATH THE RIVER, WHERE THOR DEFEATED ME, FOREVER!

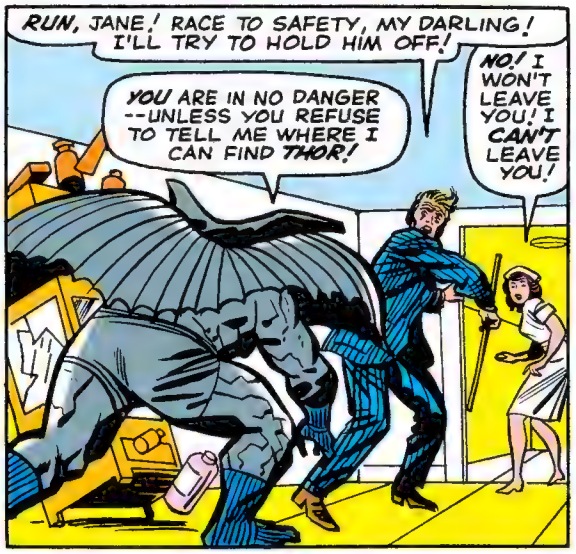

BUT NOW, THE GREY GARGOYLE IS FREE AGAIN! NOW I'M WISER, STRONGER THAN EVER!
SO, ONCE AGAIN I SHALL BATTLE THE THUNDER GOD, UNTIL I TOO POSSESS THE SECRET OF HIS IMMORTALITY!

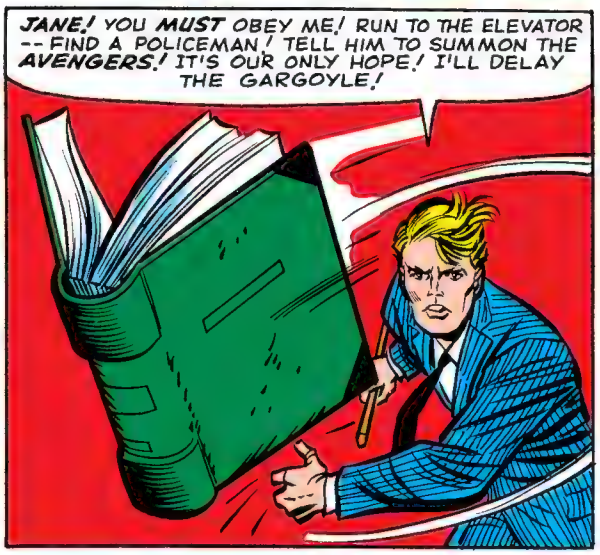

AH, MY ROOM IS EXACTLY AS I HAD LEFT IT! HOW FORTUNATE THAT I PAID MY RENT FOR ONE YEAR IN ADVANCE!
AND NOW, AS THE FANTASTICALLY POWERFUL--THE SUPREMELY SINISTER GREY GARGOYLE SITS AND PONDERS HIS NEXT MOVE, THIS IS AS GOOD A TIME AS ANY TO REFRESH YOUR MEMORY ABOUT HIS STRANGE ORIGIN...
IT SEEMS LIKE ONLY YESTERDAY THAT IT ALL HAPPENED--WHEN I WAS ONLY AN UNKNOWN YOUNG CHEMIST IN PARIS...
HOW MUCH LONGER MUST I TAKE ORDERS LIKE A MERE LACKEY? PAUL DUVAL IS MEANT FOR GREATER THINGS!
HMMM, SOMETHING IS WRONG! THE MIXTURE HAS TURNED BLUE INSTEAD OF RED! I MUST HAVE MADE A CARELESS MISTAKE!
I SPILLED SOME ON MY HAND!
IT'S INCREDIBLE! IT FEELS LIKE LIQUID FIRE! IT SEEMS TO HAVE A LIFE OF ITS OWN!
WHAT HAVE I DONE? WHAT'S HAPPENING TO MY HAND??
MY FINGERS--THEY TURNED TO STONE! IT'S THE STRANGE SUBSTANCE IN THE MIXTURE--IT GAVE THE LIQUID AN UNBELIEVABLE POWER! BUT--WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO ME??
OH NO! NO! I TOUCHED MY HAND TO MY FACE, AND NOW--
MY FACE HAS TURNED TO STONE! EVERYTHING I TOUCH BECOMES LIVING STONE! IT--IT IS MADNESS!
BUT, I SOON LEARNED IT WAS NOT MADNESS! IT WAS A GIFT--A WONDERFUL, AWESOME GIFT! I COULD ACCOMPLISH ALMOST ANYTHING WITH MY GREAT POWER!
THUS, I SEARCHED FOR THOR--TO LEARN HIS SECRET OF IMMORTALITY--FOR THAT IS THE ONLY THING I STILL NEED! ONCE I AM IMMORTAL, THE WORLD WILL BELONG TO THE GREY GARGOYLE!
AND NOW, BEFORE RETURNING TO DON BLAKE, LET US AGAIN VISIT ASGARD, WHERE ODIN IS IN A VIOLENT MOOD SUCH AS ONLY HE CAN ATTAIN!
GO BACK, LOKI! IT IS WORTH YOUR LIFE TO FACE ODIN WHILE HIS FURY RAGES!
YOU CALL THYSELF A CHEF?? OUT OF MY SIGHT, KNAVE! THY FOOD IS BUT FIT FOR SWINE!
6

SO! THERE IS THE REASON FOR ODIN'S RAGE! I THOUGHT AS MUCH!
MY OWN SON! MY FAVORED ONE! MY RIGHTFUL HEIR! GIVING UP HIS BIRTHRIGHT FOR A MERE MORTAL FEMALE!
AND I AM POWERLESS TO STOP HIM--FOR, NOT EVEN ODIN MAY INTERFERE IN MATTERS INVOLVING THE HEART OF ANOTHER!
IT IS UNTHINKABLE! UNFORGIVABLE! WOULD THAT THE LIFE HAD LEFT MY LIMBS ERE I HAD WITNESSED SO PERNICIOUS A SCENE!
BEGONE, LOKI! I HAVE NO PATIENCE FOR YOU THIS BLACK DAY!
FORGIVE ME, SIRE! I MERELY WISHED TO OFFER MY REGRETS--AND TO TELL YOU THAT I STAND WITH ODIN IN THIS MOMENT OF SHAMEFUL BETRAYAL!
I NOTE AND COMMEND YOUR LOYALTY, MY SECOND SON! THOUGH THOR HAS EVER BEEN MY FAVORED ONE, MAYHAP MY JUDGEMENT WAS FALSE! I SHALL NOT FORGET YOUR PLEDGE, OH, GODLING WHO WALKS ALONE!
AS FOR THE ONE WHO HAS FORSAKEN ME, I WASH MY HANDS OF HIM! FROM THIS MOMENT HENCE, HIS POWER IS GONE! IF HE WOULD REMAIN A MORTAL, THEN SO BE IT! THERE IS NO THUNDER GOD!
THUS, THE ULTIMATE VICTOR IS LOKI--AS I ALWAYS KNEW I WOULD BE!
AND NOW, WE RETURN TO DR. BLAKE...
YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME! I CAN SEE IT IN YOUR EYES! BUT, YOU MUST!
DOCTOR, YOU'VE BEEN WORKING SO HARD! PERHAPS, IF YOU WENT HOME TO BED...
WAIT! WATCH ME! I'LL PROVE THAT I'M THE GOD OF THUNDER!
SEE? ALL I NEED DO IS STAMP MY CANE UPON THE FLOOR, AND--WHA--? WHAT'S WRONG?
OH, DON, MY DARLING! YOU DON'T HAVE TO TRY TO GLAMORIZE YOURSELF FOR ME! I LOVE YOU JUST AS YOU ARE! I DON'T CARE WHO THOR REALLY IS!
7


IT WAS AT THE OFFICE OF DR. BLAKE THAT I FIRST ENCOUNTERED THOR! I'LL FORCE THE LAME PHYSICIAN TO TELL ME WHERE TO FIND MY ENEMY NOW!
ONLY ODIN HAS THE POWER TO NULLIFY THE ENCHANTMENT OF MY CANE! IT MUST BE HIS DOING!
PLEASE, DON-- YOU MUST RID YOURSELF OF THAT OBSESSION!


BUT, BEFORE ANOTHER WORD CAN BE UTTERED...
CRASH
THE GREY GARGOYLE! HE'S COME BACK!


RUN, JANE! RACE TO SAFETY, MY DARLING! I'LL TRY TO HOLD HIM OFF!
YOU ARE IN NO DANGER --UNLESS YOU REFUSE TO TELL ME WHERE I CAN FIND THOR!
NO! I WON'T LEAVE YOU! I CAN'T LEAVE YOU!

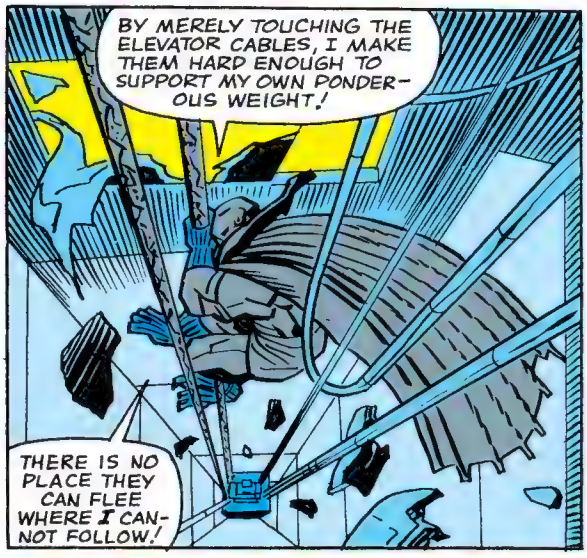

JANE! YOU MUST OBEY ME! RUN TO THE ELEVATOR -- FIND A POLICEMAN! TELL HIM TO SUMMON THE AVENGERS! IT'S OUR ONLY HOPE! I'LL DELAY THE GARGOYLE!

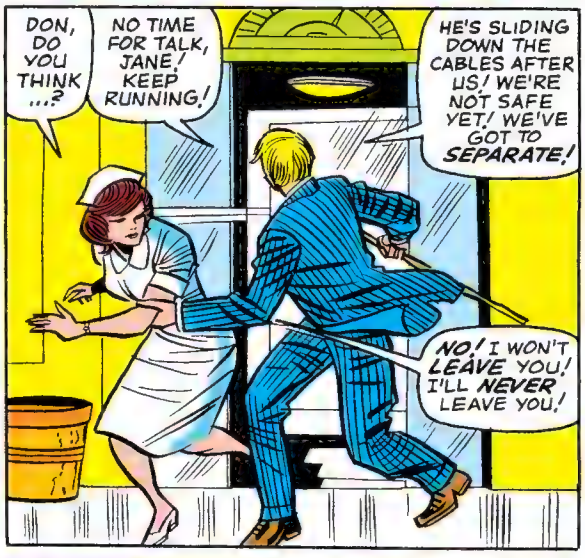
YOU ARE AS BRAINLESS AS YOU ARE FEEBLE, BLAKE! YOU THINK A THROWN BOOK CAN HOLD BACK THE GREY GARGOYLE ??!
SEE HOW IT TURNS TO SOLID STONE, AT THE MERE TOUCH OF MY ROCK-HARD FINGERS!

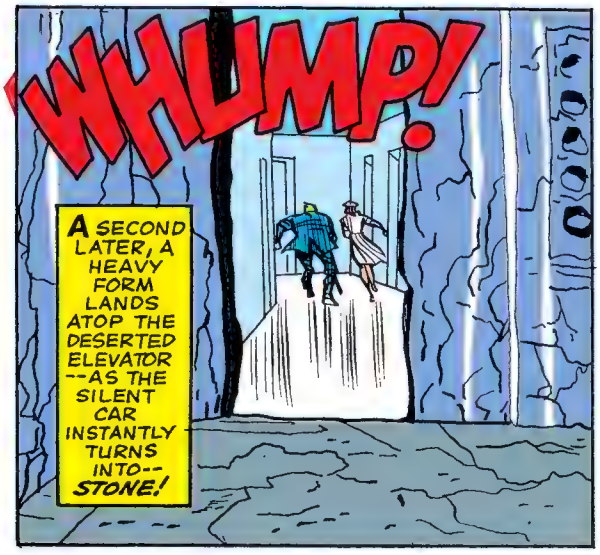
THUS, IN MY HANDS, IT BECOMES AS DEADLY AS A ROCKET-POWERED PROJECTILE!
THE ELEVATOR IS HERE, DON! HURRY, MY DARLING! BEFORE HE TOUCHES YOU!
HE WON'T! NOT WHILE HE THINKS I'M HIS ONLY LINK TO THOR!

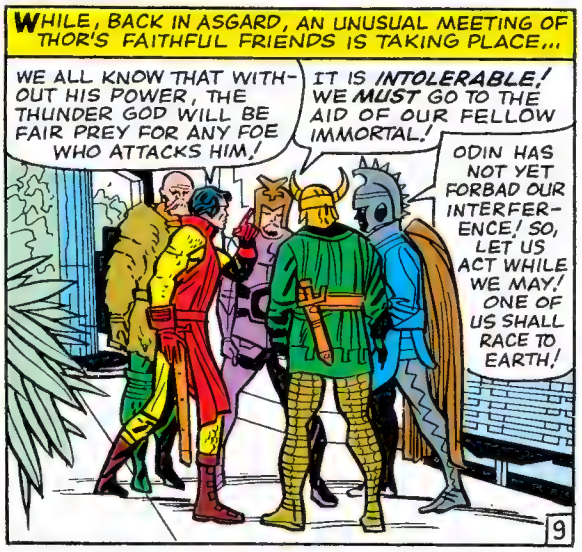
AND, THE LAME PHYSICIAN HAS INDEED GUESSED RIGHT! THE GREY GARGOYLE STILL HESITATES, FEARING TO STILL THE TONGUE OF THE ONE HUMAN WHO MIGHT KNOW THOR'S WHEREABOUTS! AND SO...
COME BACK! MY PATIENCE WILL NOT LAST FOREVER!
WE MADE IT! NOW, IF ONLY THE DOORS WILL CLOSE IN TIME!

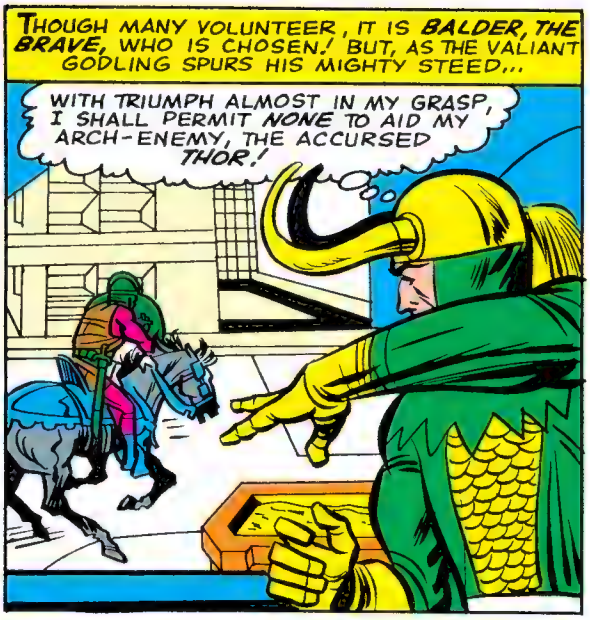
AND CLOSE THEY DO! BUT, THE ROCK-HARD POWER OF THE GREY GARGOYLE CANNOT BE STOPPED BY MERE METAL DOORS...
I WARN YOU, DO YOU HEAR?? I'LL TURN YOU BOTH TO STONE BEFORE I LET YOU ESCAPE ME!
WHOOM

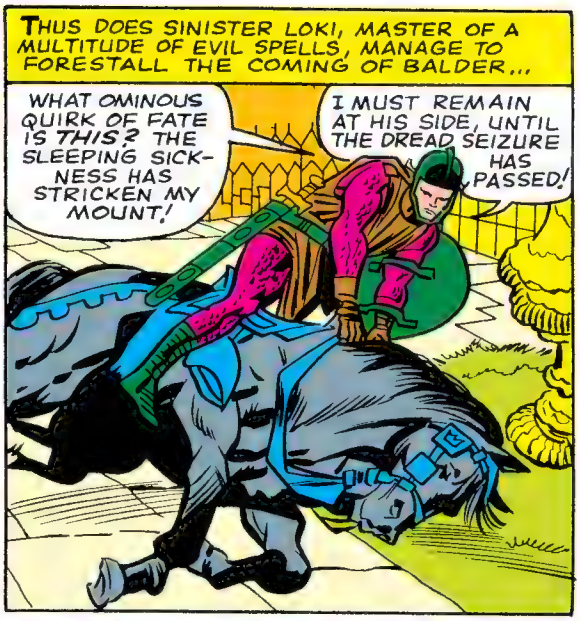

BY MERELY TOUCHING THE ELEVATOR CABLES, I MAKE THEM HARD ENOUGH TO SUPPORT MY OWN PONDER-OUS WEIGHT!
THERE IS NO PLACE THEY CAN FLEE WHERE I CAN-NOT FOLLOW!

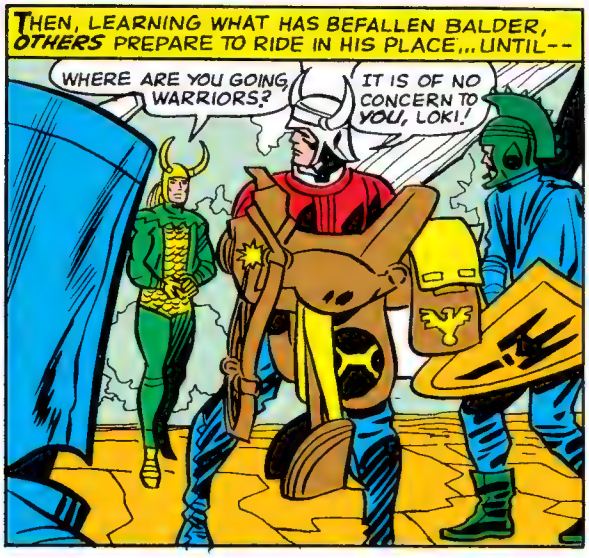

DON, DO YOU THINK ...?
NO TIME FOR TALK, JANE! KEEP RUNNING!
HE'S SLIDING DOWN THE CABLES AFTER US! WE'RE NOT SAFE YET! WE'VE GOT TO SEPARATE!
NO! I WON'T LEAVE YOU! I'LL NEVER LEAVE YOU!


WHUMP!
A SECOND LATER, A HEAVY FORM LANDS ATOP THE DESERTED ELEVATOR --AS THE SILENT CAR INSTANTLY TURNS INTO-- STONE!

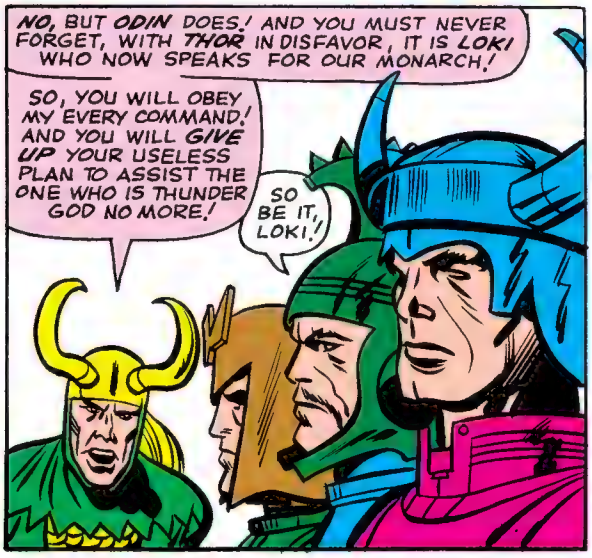

WHILE, BACK IN ASGARD, AN UNUSUAL MEETING OF THOR'S FAITHFUL FRIENDS IS TAKING PLACE...
WE ALL KNOW THAT WITH-OUT HIS POWER, THE THUNDER GOD WILL BE FAIR PREY FOR ANY FOE WHO ATTACKS HIM!
IT IS INTOLERABLE! WE MUST GO TO THE AID OF OUR FELLOW IMMORTAL!
ODIN HAS NOT YET FORBAD OUR INTERFER-ENCE! SO, LET US ACT WHILE WE MAY! ONE OF US SHALL RACE TO EARTH!

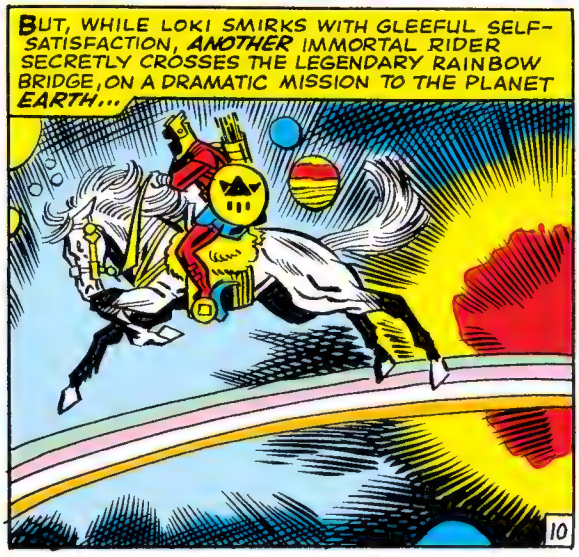

THOUGH MANY VOLUNTEER, IT IS BALDER, THE BRAVE, WHO IS CHOSEN! BUT, AS THE VALIANT GODLING SPURS HIS MIGHTY STEED...
WITH TRIUMPH ALMOST IN MY GRASP, I SHALL PERMIT NONE TO AID MY ARCH-ENEMY, THE ACCURSED THOR!

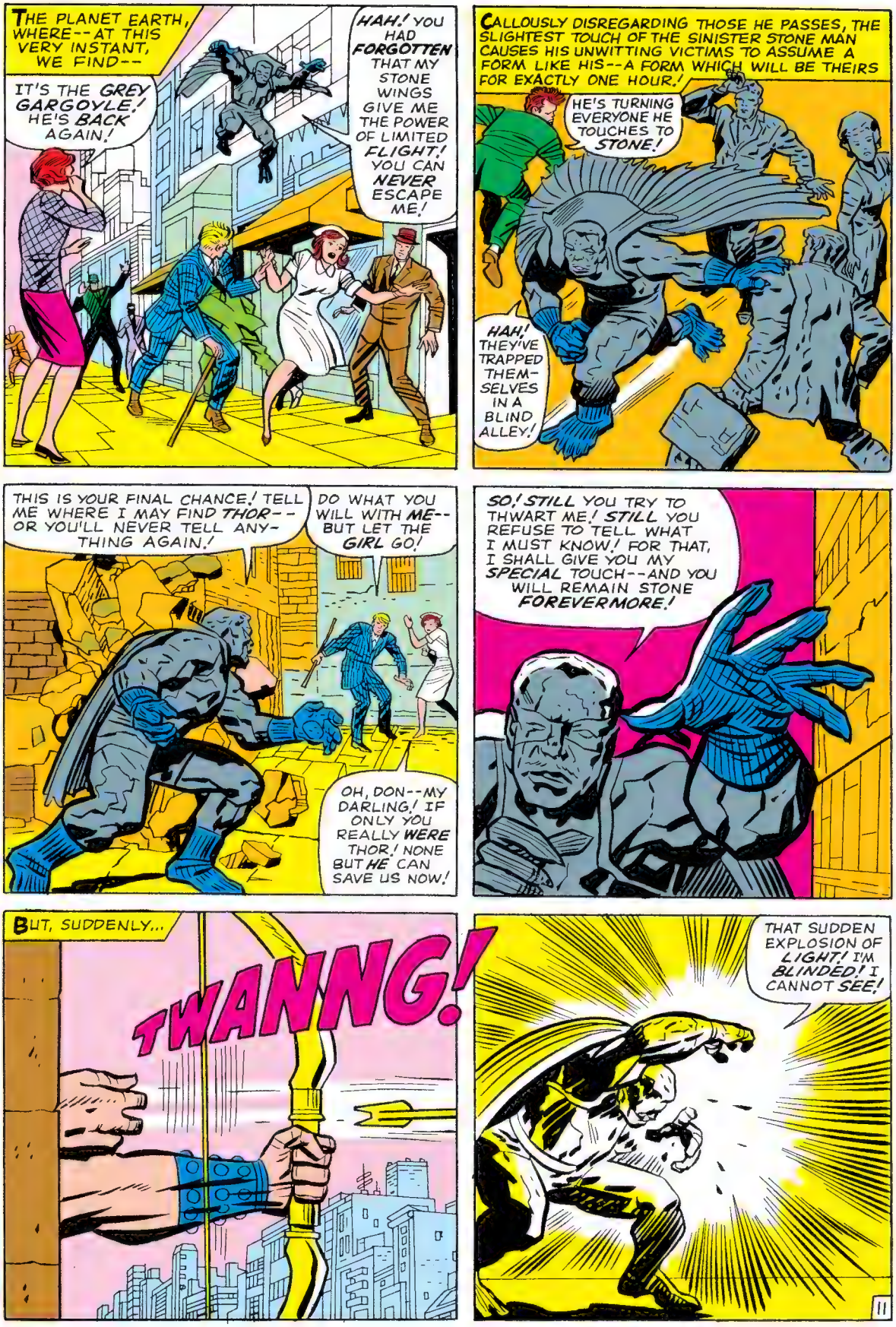

THUS DOES SINISTER LOKI, MASTER OF A MULTITUDE OF EVIL SPELLS, MANAGE TO FORESTALL THE COMING OF BALDER...
WHAT OMINOUS QUIRK OF FATE IS THIS? THE SLEEPING SICKNESS HAS STRICKEN MY MOUNT!
I MUST REMAIN AT HIS SIDE, UNTIL THE DREAD SEIZURE HAS PASSED!

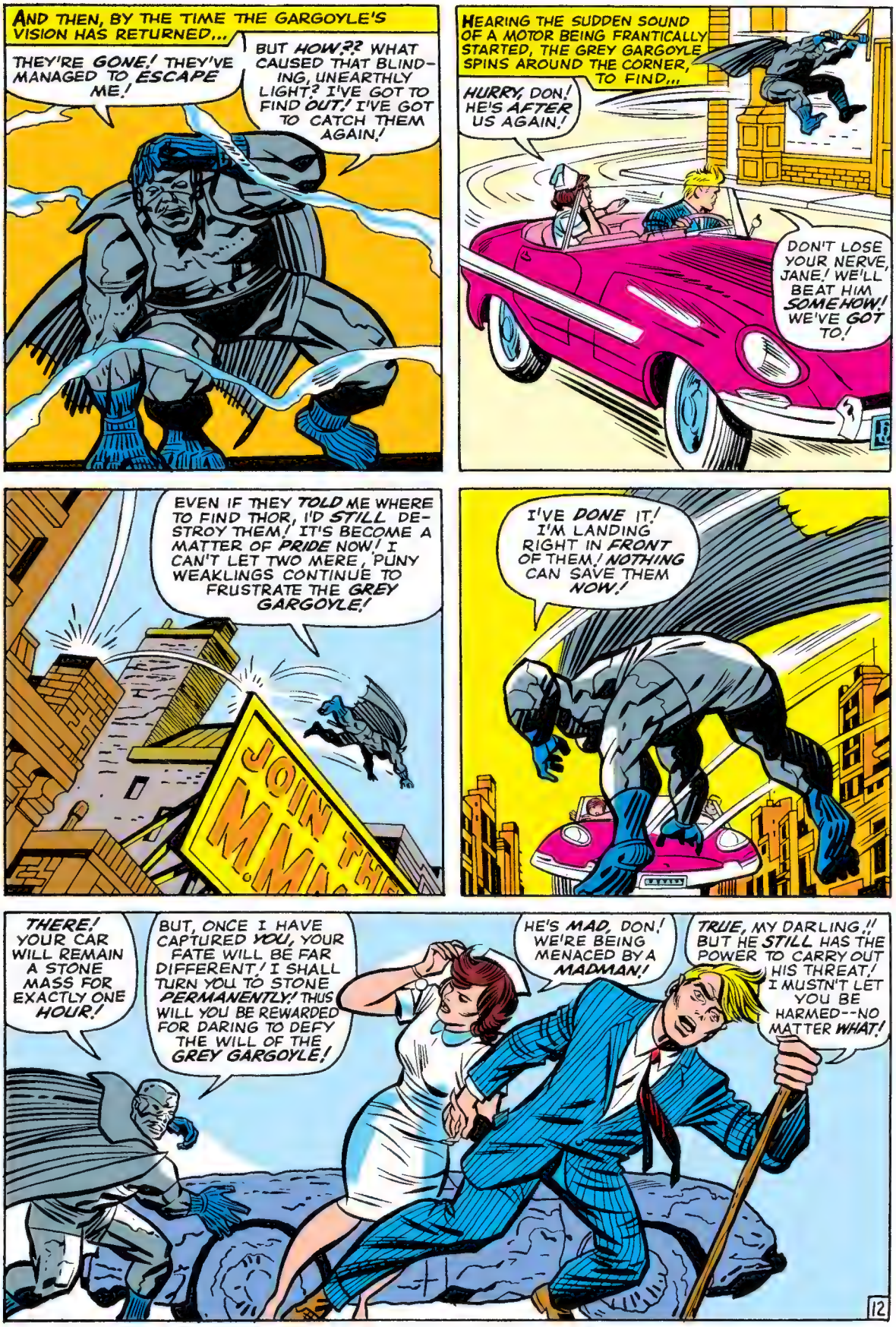

THEN, LEARNING WHAT HAS BEFALLEN BALDER, OTHERS PREPARE TO RIDE IN HIS PLACE... UNTIL--
WHERE ARE YOU GOING, WARRIORS?
IT IS OF NO CONCERN TO YOU, LOKI!

YOU ARE WRONG! I HAVE BATTLE ORDERS FOR YOU!
YOU ARE HEREBY DISPATCHED TO PATROL THE EASTERN SECTOR OF OUR REALM UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE!
YOU HAVE NOT THE AUTHORITY, CRAFTY ONE!

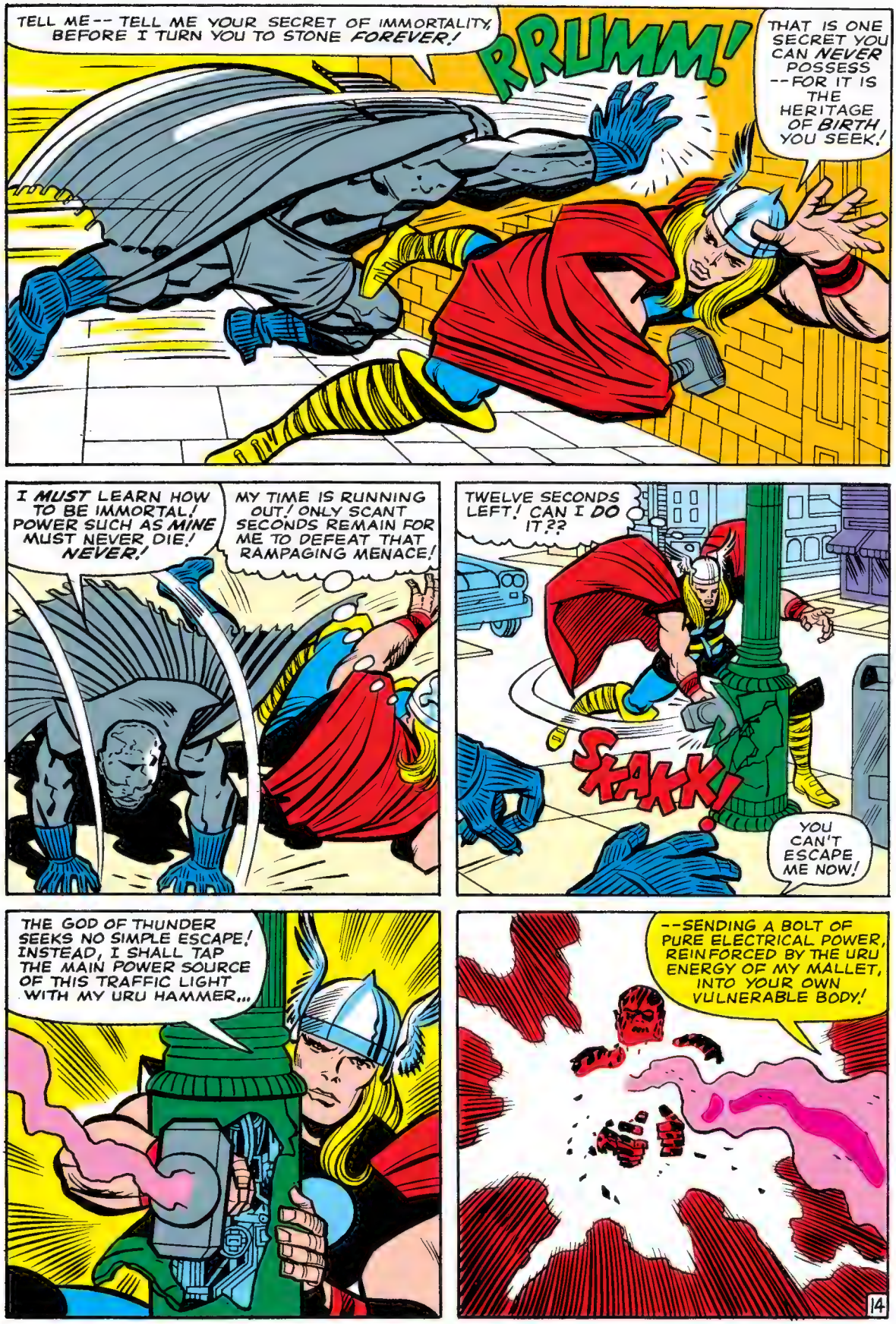

NO, BUT ODIN DOES! AND YOU MUST NEVER FORGET, WITH THOR IN DISFAVOR, IT IS LOKI WHO NOW SPEAKS FOR OUR MONARCH!
SO, YOU WILL OBEY MY EVERY COMMAND! AND YOU WILL GIVE UP YOUR USELESS PLAN TO ASSIST THE ONE WHO IS THUNDER GOD NO MORE!
SO BE IT, LOKI!

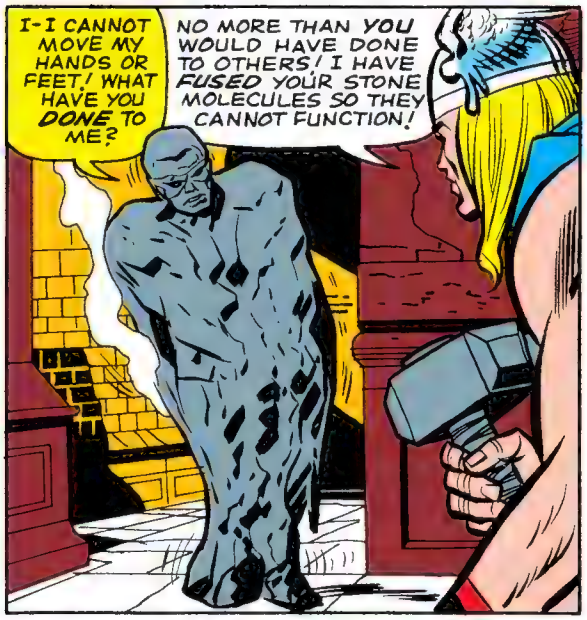

BUT, WHILE LOKI SMIRKS WITH GLEEFUL SELF-SATISFACTION, ANOTHER IMMORTAL RIDER SECRETLY CROSSES THE LEGENDARY RAINBOW BRIDGE, ON A DRAMATIC MISSION TO THE PLANET EARTH...


THE PLANET EARTH, WHERE--AT THIS VERY INSTANT, WE FIND--
IT'S THE GREY GARGOYLE! HE'S BACK AGAIN!
HAH! YOU HAD FORGOTTEN THAT MY STONE WINGS GIVE ME THE POWER OF LIMITED FLIGHT! YOU CAN NEVER ESCAPE ME!
CALLOUSLY DISREGARDING THOSE HE PASSES, THE SLIGHTEST TOUCH OF THE SINISTER STONE MAN CAUSES HIS UNWITTING VICTIMS TO ASSUME A FORM LIKE HIS--A FORM WHICH WILL BE THEIRS FOR EXACTLY ONE HOUR!
HE'S TURNING EVERYONE HE TOUCHES TO STONE!
HAH! THEY'VE TRAPPED THEMSELVES IN A BLIND ALLEY!
THIS IS YOUR FINAL CHANCE! TELL ME WHERE I MAY FIND THOR--OR YOU'LL NEVER TELL ANYTHING AGAIN!
DO WHAT YOU WILL WITH ME--BUT LET THE GIRL GO!
OH, DON--MY DARLING! IF ONLY YOU REALLY WERE THOR! NONE BUT HE CAN SAVE US NOW!
SO! STILL YOU TRY TO THWART ME! STILL YOU REFUSE TO TELL WHAT I MUST KNOW! FOR THAT, I SHALL GIVE YOU MY SPECIAL TOUCH--AND YOU WILL REMAIN STONE FOREVERMORE!
BUT, SUDDENLY...
TWANNG!
THAT SUDDEN EXPLOSION OF LIGHT! I'M BLINDED! I CANNOT SEE!
11

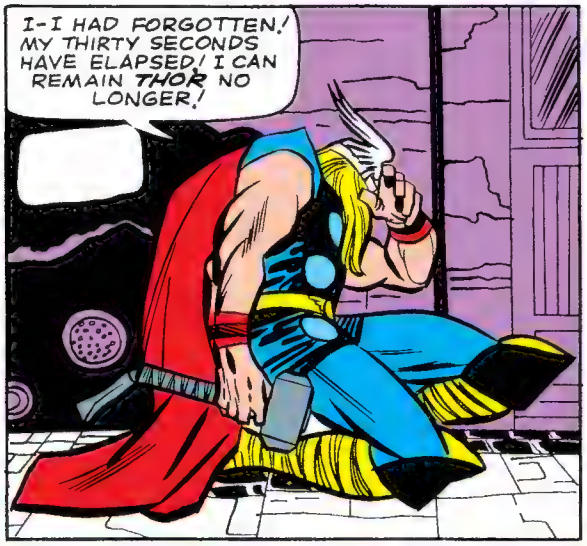

AND THEN, BY THE TIME THE GARGOYLE'S VISION HAS RETURNED...
THEY'RE GONE! THEY'VE MANAGED TO ESCAPE ME!
BUT HOW?? WHAT CAUSED THAT BLINDING, UNEARTHLY LIGHT? I'VE GOT TO FIND OUT! I'VE GOT TO CATCH THEM AGAIN!
HEARING THE SUDDEN SOUND OF A MOTOR BEING FRANTICALLY STARTED, THE GREY GARGOYLE SPINS AROUND THE CORNER, TO FIND...
HURRY, DON! HE'S AFTER US AGAIN!
DON'T LOSE YOUR NERVE, JANE! WE'LL BEAT HIM SOMEHOW! WE'VE GOT TO!
EVEN IF THEY TOLD ME WHERE TO FIND THOR, I'D STILL DESTROY THEM! IT'S BECOME A MATTER OF PRIDE NOW! I CAN'T LET TWO MERE, PUNY WEAKLINGS CONTINUE TO FRUSTRATE THE GREY GARGOYLE!
I'VE DONE IT! I'M LANDING RIGHT IN FRONT OF THEM! NOTHING CAN SAVE THEM NOW!
THERE! YOUR CAR WILL REMAIN A STONE MASS FOR EXACTLY ONE HOUR!
BUT, ONCE I HAVE CAPTURED YOU, YOUR FATE WILL BE FAR DIFFERENT! I SHALL TURN YOU TO STONE PERMANENTLY! THUS WILL YOU BE REWARDED FOR DARING TO DEFY THE WILL OF THE GREY GARGOYLE!
HE'S MAD, DON! WE'RE BEING MENACED BY A MADMAN!
TRUE, MY DARLING!! BUT HE STILL HAS THE POWER TO CARRY OUT HIS THREAT! I MUSTN'T LET YOU BE HARMED--NO MATTER WHAT!
12

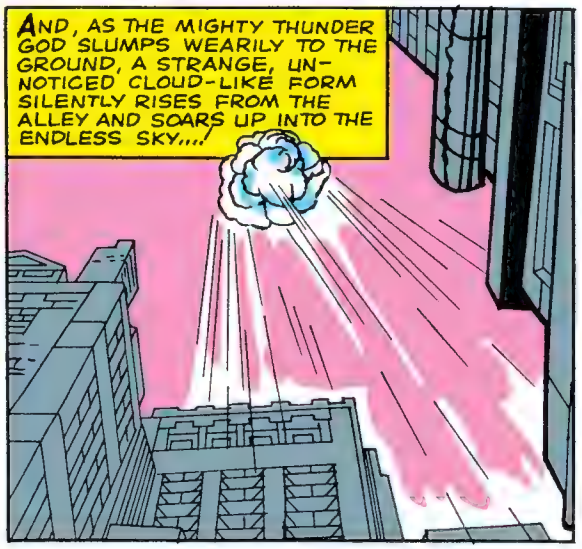
BUT ALAS, THE LAME PHYSICIAN'S LIMBS ARE NOT THE EQUAL OF HIS FIGHTING HEART! IN HIS DESPERATE EFFORT TO BRING HIS LOVED ONE TO SAFETY, HIS WEAKER LEG BUCKLES UNDER HIM, AND...
NOW I'VE GOT YOU!
AT THAT SECOND, A STEEL-SINEWED ARM REACHES OUT, TOUCHING THE FRANTIC DOCTOR WITH A CALM, STEADY SURGE OF ENERGY!
THOR SHALL LIVE AGAIN! YOU HAVE THIRTY SECONDS! MAKE EACH ONE COUNT!
STILL HIDDEN BY THE CONCEALING WALL, HE WHO WAS DON BLAKE UNHESITATINGLY STRIKES HIS CANE UPON THE PAVEMENT...
IF ONLY IT'S NOT TOO LATE!
...AND HE WHO IS GOD OF THUNDER APPEARS ONCE MORE...!
GARGOYLE!! YOU HAVE BEEN SEARCHING FOR THOR--
KKRAKK!
NOW, YOU HAVE FOUND HIM!
ONE MERE HAMMER THRUST CANNOT INJURE MY ROCK-HARD BODY! I DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU CAME FROM, THUNDER GOD, BUT YOU WON'T LEAVE UNTIL I'VE CONQUERED YOU!
WE SHALL SEE WHO IS THE CONQUEROR, AND WHO IS TO BE THE VANQUISHED!
13

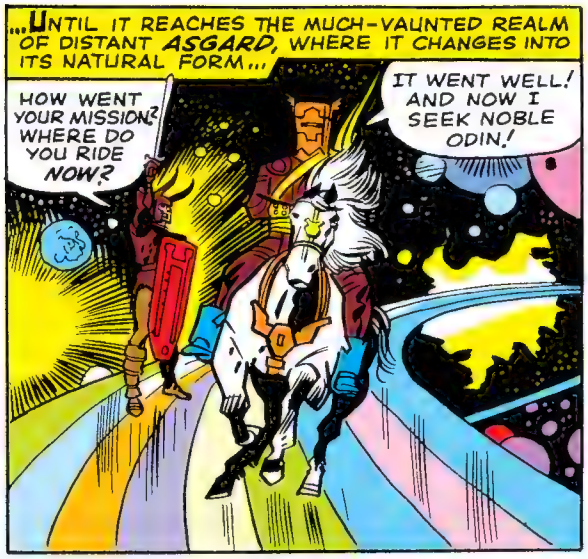

TELL ME-- TELL ME YOUR SECRET OF IMMORTALITY, BEFORE I TURN YOU TO STONE FOREVER!
RRUMM!
THAT IS ONE SECRET YOU CAN NEVER POSSESS --FOR IT IS THE HERITAGE OF BIRTH YOU SEEK!
I MUST LEARN HOW TO BE IMMORTAL! POWER SUCH AS MINE MUST NEVER DIE! NEVER!
MY TIME IS RUNNING OUT! ONLY SCANT SECONDS REMAIN FOR ME TO DEFEAT THAT RAMPAGING MENACE!
TWELVE SECONDS LEFT! CAN I DO IT??
STAKK!
YOU CAN'T ESCAPE ME NOW!
THE GOD OF THUNDER SEEKS NO SIMPLE ESCAPE! INSTEAD, I SHALL TAP THE MAIN POWER SOURCE OF THIS TRAFFIC LIGHT WITH MY URU HAMMER...
--SENDING A BOLT OF PURE ELECTRICAL POWER, REINFORCED BY THE URU ENERGY OF MY MALLET, INTO YOUR OWN VULNERABLE BODY!
14

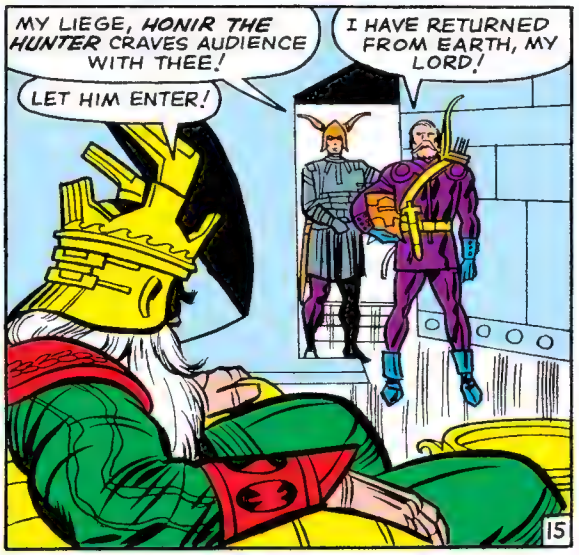

I-I CANNOT MOVE MY HANDS OR FEET! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO ME?
NO MORE THAN YOU WOULD HAVE DONE TO OTHERS! I HAVE FUSED YOUR STONE MOLECULES SO THEY CANNOT FUNCTION!

THUS WILL HE REMAIN, UNTIL I RETURN! AND NOW, I MUST FIND MY UNKNOWN BENEFACTOR!
BUT, WHY DO MY LIMBS FEEL SO WEAK--? WHY DOES MY HEAD BEGIN TO SPIN...??


I-I HAD FORGOTTEN! MY THIRTY SECONDS HAVE ELAPSED! I CAN REMAIN THOR NO LONGER!

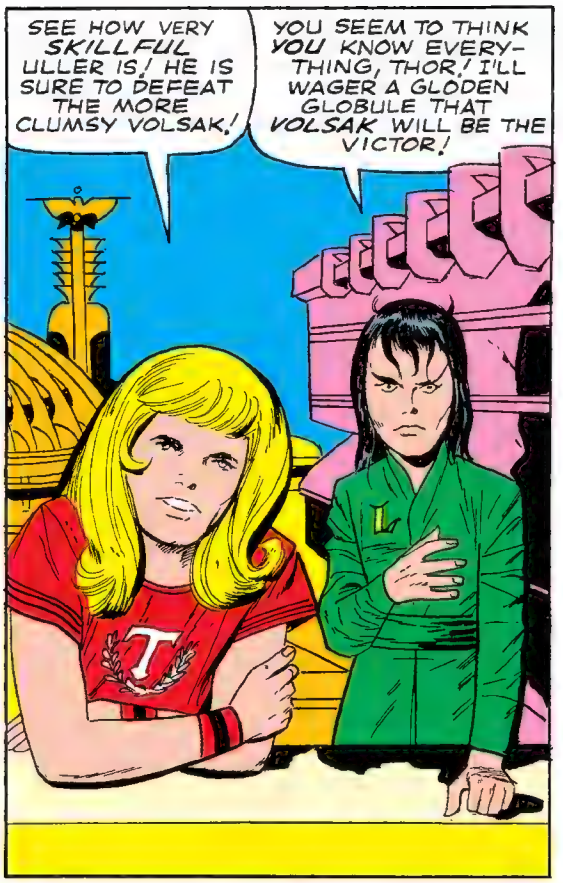

AND, AS THE MIGHTY THUNDER GOD SLUMPS WEARILY TO THE GROUND, A STRANGE, UNNOTICED CLOUD-LIKE FORM SILENTLY RISES FROM THE ALLEY AND SOARS UP INTO THE ENDLESS SKY....

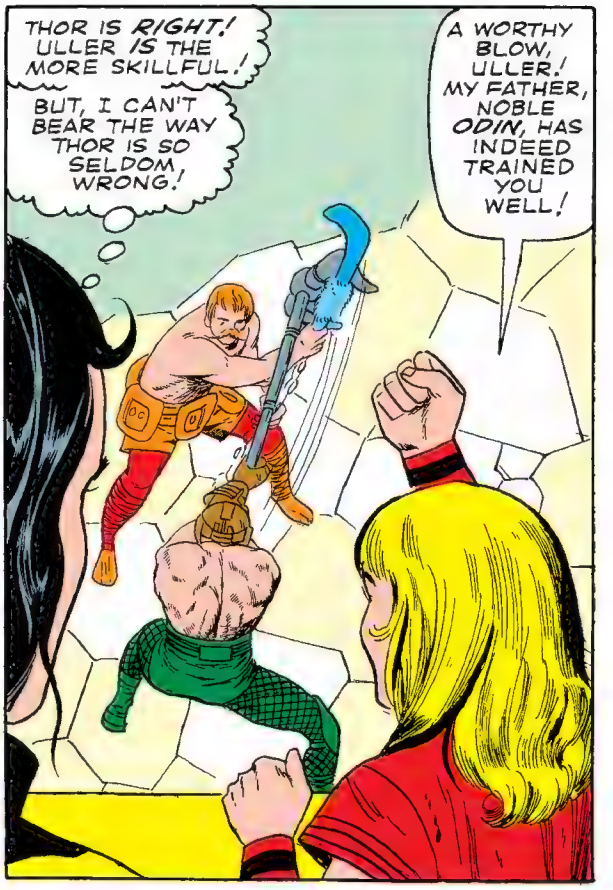

...UNTIL IT REACHES THE MUCH-VAUNTED REALM OF DISTANT ASGARD, WHERE IT CHANGES INTO ITS NATURAL FORM...
HOW WENT YOUR MISSION? WHERE DO YOU RIDE NOW?
IT WENT WELL! AND NOW I SEEK NOBLE ODIN!


MY LIEGE, HONIR THE HUNTER CRAVES AUDIENCE WITH THEE!
LET HIM ENTER!
I HAVE RETURNED FROM EARTH, MY LORD!

HOW WENT YOUR MISSION, MY TRUSTED ONE?
I DID AS YOU ORDAINED, MY LIEGE! I RESTORED YOUR SON'S POWER LONG ENOUGH FOR HIM TO SAVE HIMSELF AND VANQUISH HIS FOE! YOU MAY SET YOUR MIND AT EASE, SIRE! THOR STILL LIVES!
PERHAPS I HAVE NOT THE WILL TO BE TRULY OMNIPOTENT! I COULD NOT FAIL MY FIRST BORN, NO MATTER HOW VEXED MY HEART! I SHALL RETURN HIS POWER--FOR HE IS STILL THE WORLD TO ME!
ONLY THE STRONG DARE TO BE GENTLE, MY LORD! AND ONLY THE WISE CAN BE AS FORGIVING AS ODIN!
SO! ONCE AGAIN THE SOFT-HEARTED ODIN HAS CHEATED ME OF MY RIGHTFUL HERITAGE! BUT I SHALL NEVER REST UNTIL THOR HAS BEEN BANISHED--FOR ALL TIME!
THE CHOICE SHALL NOW BE THOR'S! THE MORTAL GIRL DID NOT BELIEVE HIS CLAIM! I PRAY HE WILL ABANDON HIS EFFORT!
AND, ON OUR DISTANT PLANET, AN ETERNITY AWAY, WHICH SPINS SO BRIGHTLY THRU THE MYSTERIOUS COSMOS...
THOUGH I AM DR. DON BLAKE ONCE MORE, MY POWER HAS BEEN RESTORED TO ME! I CAN FEEL IT, SURGING THRU MY ENCHANTED CANE!
HOW CAN I AGAIN GIVE UP SO PRECIOUS A GIFT--EVEN IN THE NAME OF LOVE?
JANE--MY DEAREST! WAKE UP! IT'S ALL RIGHT NOW! YOU'RE SAFE! THE GREY GARGOYLE IS DEFEATED! THOR HAS SAVED US!
DON! THANK HEAVENS! YOU SOUND LIKE YOURSELF AGAIN! THE MADNESS HAS LEFT YOU!
YES! THE MADNESS HAS LEFT ME!
16
SEE? THOR HAS TAKEN THE POWER OF MOTION FROM THE STONE MAN! HE CAN HARM NO ONE NOW!
BUT, WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO HIM? WHAT IF HIS POWER RETURNS?
THE POLICE WILL HANDLE IT, JANE!
AND, IF HE SHOULD AGAIN BE NEEDED, I IMAGINE THAT THOR, TOO, WILL NEVER FAIL TO APPEAR!
I'M GLAD HE NEVER SEEMS TO STAY VERY LONG! I'D MUCH RATHER SPEND MY TIME WITH A FOOLISH, BUT WONDERFUL MAN NAMED DON BLAKE!
THE END
AND SO, ALL COMES BACK TO NORMAL IN A WORLD WHICH SEEMED TO HAVE GONE MAD! TRANQUILITY RETURNS TO ASGARD, AND ONCE AGAIN THE POWER OF THE THUNDER GOD IS LODGED WHERE IT RIGHTLY BELONGS--WHERE IT MUST EVER REMAIN!

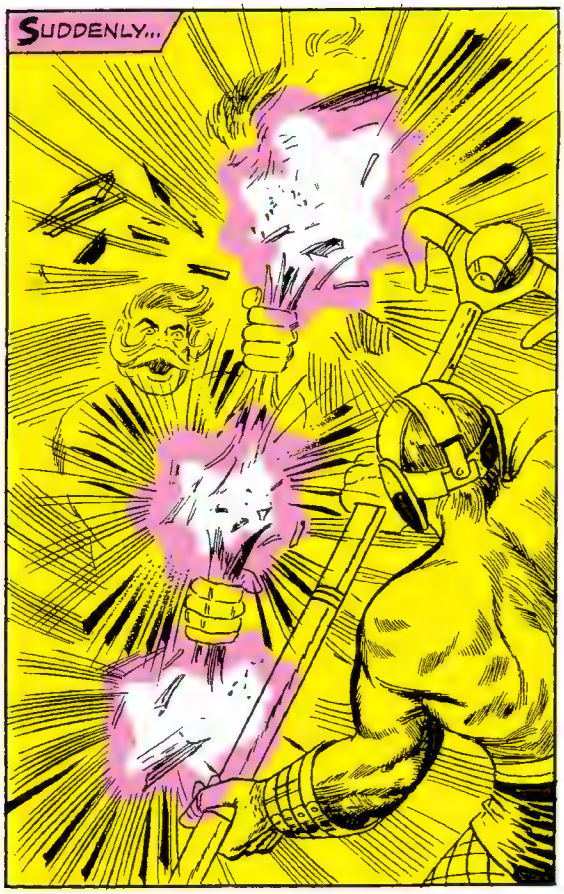
Tales of ASGARD
HOME OF THE MIGHTY NORSE GODS!
ANOTHER MILESTONE IN OUR GREAT BIOGRAPHIES-IN-DEPTH SERIES
"THE BOYHOOD OF LOKI!"
THROUGHOUT THE AGES, THE IMMORTALS OF ASGARD HAVE THRILLED TO ATHLETIC CONTESTS, EVEN AS MORTALS DO TODAY!
LET US GO BACK TO THE PAST, WHERE WE FIND TEN-YEAR OLD THOR, AND HIS HALF-BROTHER, LOKI, WATCHING THE TOURNEY!
IS IT NOT EXCITING, LOKI? WHOSOEVER HOOKS THE QUARTERSTAFF FROM THE OTHER WINS THE TOURNAMENT!
NO! IT IS TOO TAME FOR ME, THOR!
a STAN LEE and JACK KIRBY FABULOUS FEATURETTE!
INKED BY: VINCE COLLETTA
LETTERED BY: ARTIE SIMEK

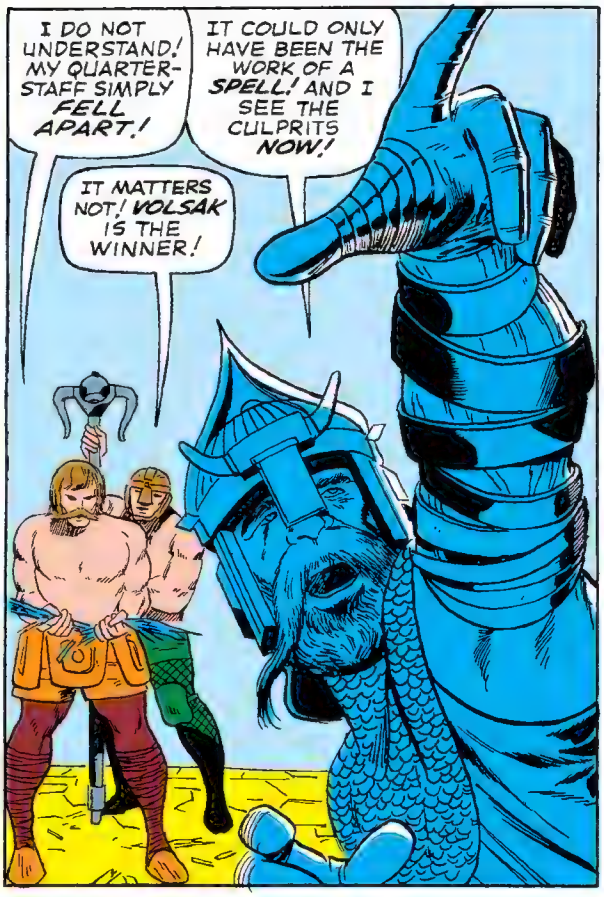

SEE HOW VERY SKILLFUL ULLER IS! HE IS SURE TO DEFEAT THE MORE CLUMSY VOLSAK!
YOU SEEM TO THINK YOU KNOW EVERY-THING, THOR! I'LL WAGER A GLODEN GLOBULE THAT VOLSAK WILL BE THE VICTOR!

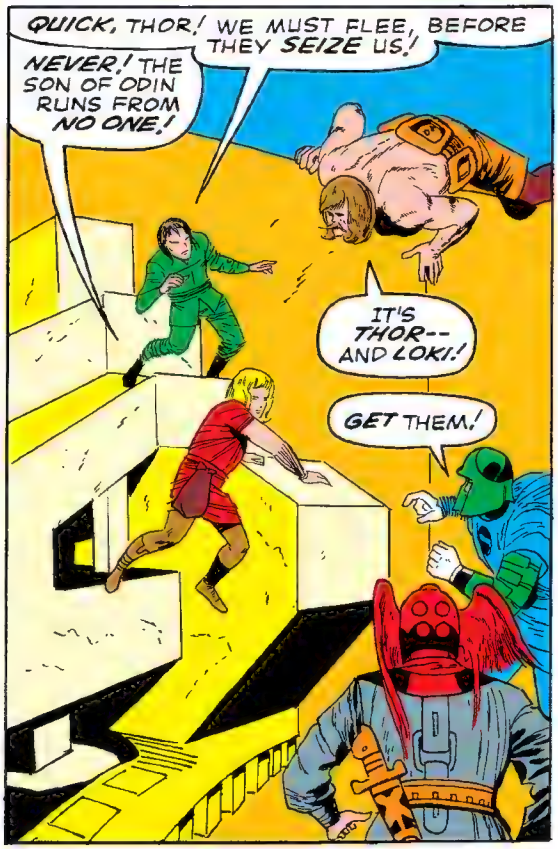

THOR IS RIGHT! ULLER IS THE MORE SKILLFUL!
BUT, I CAN'T BEAR THE WAY THOR IS SO SELDOM, WRONG!
A WORTHY BLOW, ULLER! MY FATHER, NOBLE ODIN, HAS INDEED TRAINED YOU WELL!

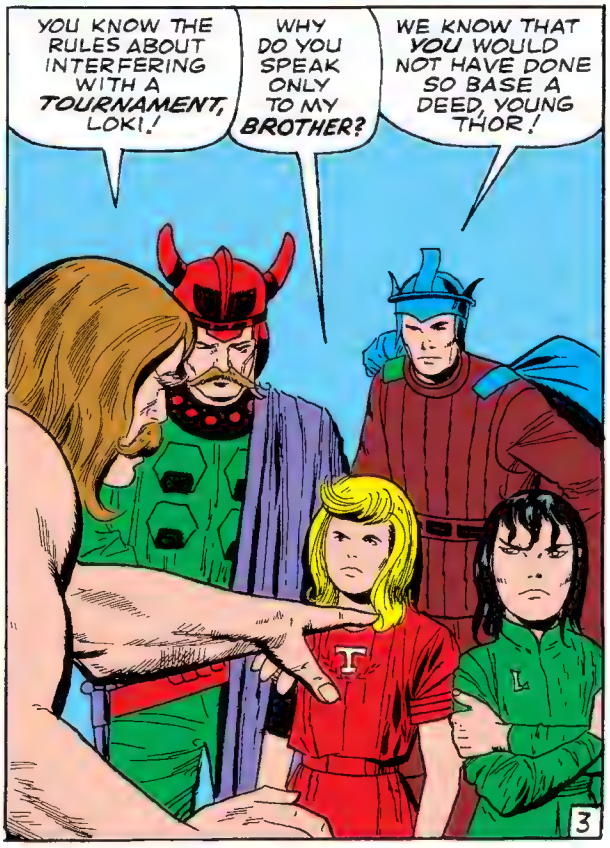
SEE, LOKI! ULLER IS BUT SECONDS AWAY FROM VICTORY!
AGAIN THOR HAS BEEN PROVEN RIGHT--WHILE LOKI IS WRONG! BUT THERE IS STILL TIME FOR ME TO SAVE THE DAY-- IF I MOVE QUICKLY!

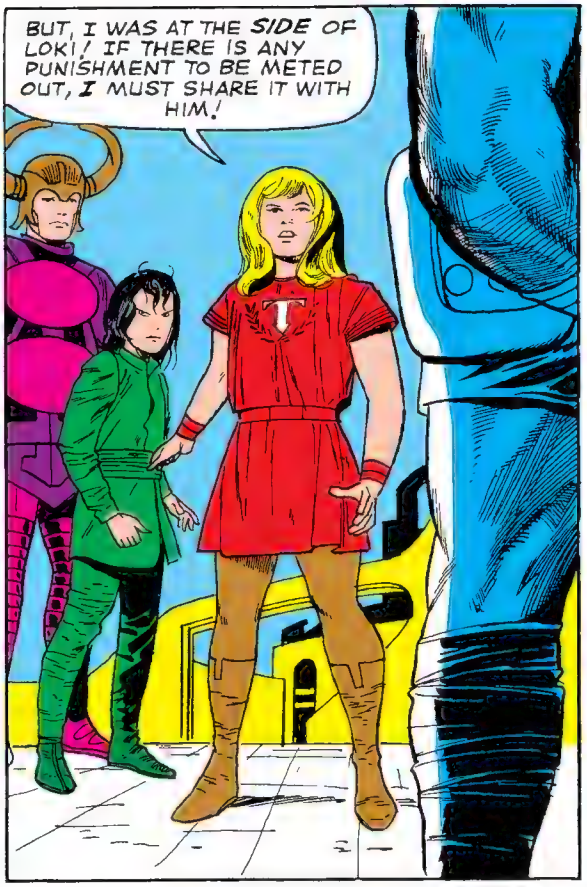
ONE SIMPLE SPELL, TAUGHT TO ME BUT A FEW DAYS AGO BY THE NORN WITCH WOMEN MIGHT CHANGE THE TIDE OF BATTLE!
HOW I LONG FOR THE DAY WHEN I, TOO, SHALL HAVE THE RIGHT TO BRANDISH A WAR CLUB DURING SUCH A JOUST!


SUDDENLY...

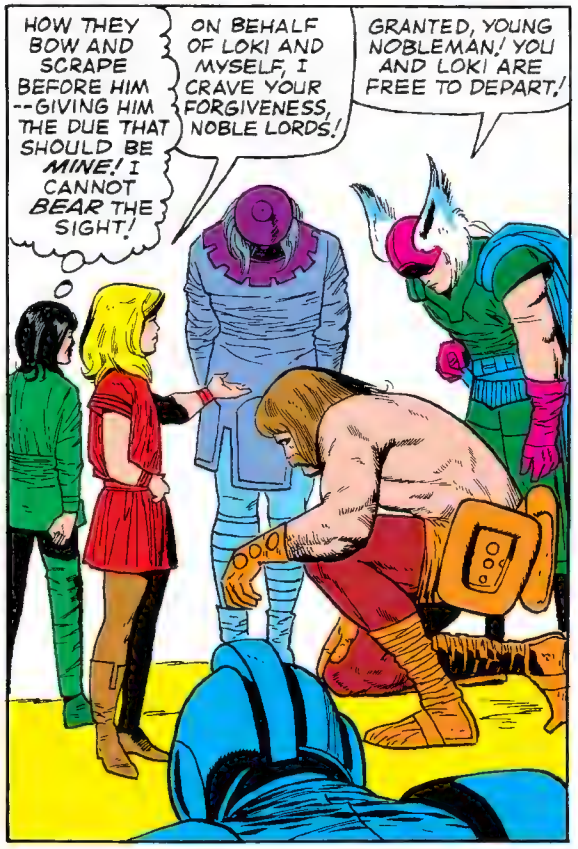

I DO NOT UNDERSTAND! MY QUARTER-STAFF SIMPLY FELL APART!
IT COULD ONLY HAVE BEEN THE WORK OF A SPELL! AND I SEE THE CULPRITS NOW!
IT MATTERS NOT! VOLSAK IS THE WINNER!

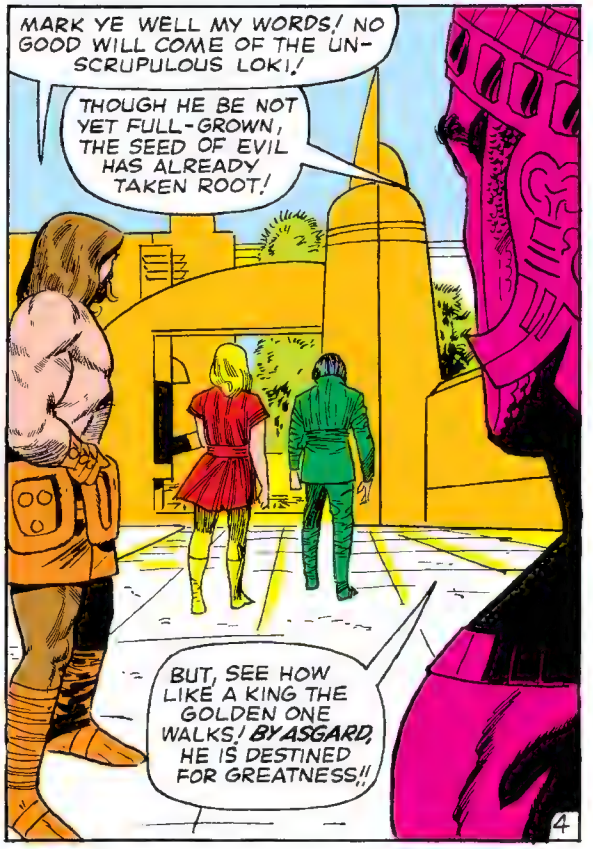

QUICK, THOR! WE MUST FLEE, BEFORE THEY SEIZE US!
NEVER! THE SON OF ODIN RUNS FROM NO ONE!
IT'S THOR-- AND LOKI!
GET THEM!


YOU KNOW THE RULES ABOUT INTERFERING WITH A TOURNAMENT, LOKI!
WHY DO YOU SPEAK ONLY TO MY BROTHER?
WE KNOW THAT YOU WOULD NOT HAVE DONE SO BASE A DEED, YOUNG THOR!
3

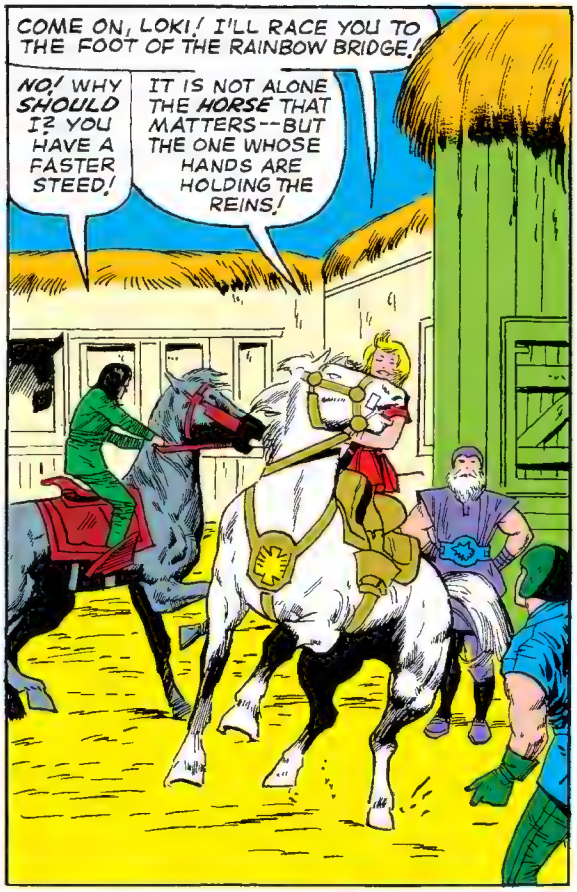

BUT, I WAS AT THE SIDE OF LOKI! IF THERE IS ANY PUNISHMENT TO BE METED OUT, I MUST SHARE IT WITH HIM!

YOU ARE TRULY THE SON OF ODIN! YOUR SOUL IS AS NOBLE AS THE NAME YOU BEAR!
BECAUSE OF YOUR GALLANTRY, YOUNG PRINCE, THERE SHALL BE NO PUNISHMENT! THE INCIDENT IS OVER!

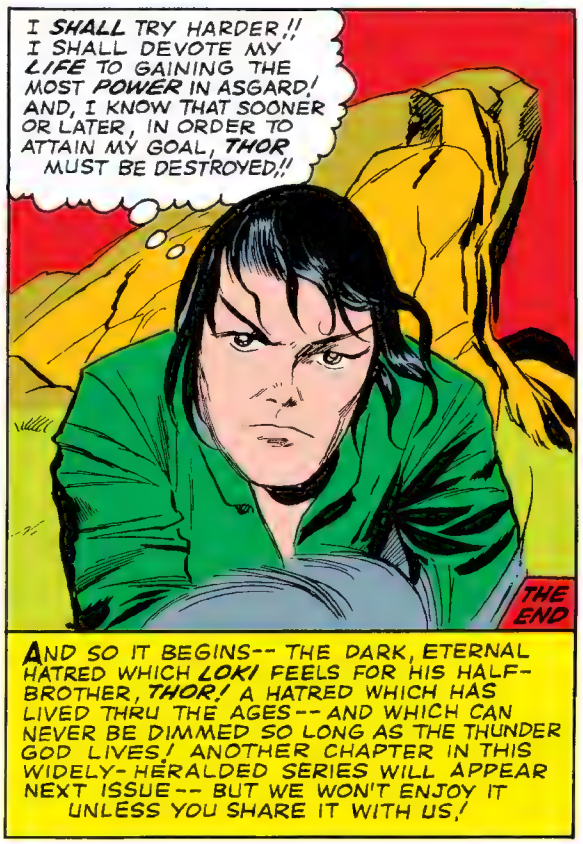

HOW THEY BOW AND SCRAPE BEFORE HIM --GIVING HIM THE DUE THAT SHOULD BE MINE! I CANNOT BEAR THE SIGHT!
ON BEHALF OF LOKI AND MYSELF, I CRAVE YOUR FORGIVENESS, NOBLE LORDS!
GRANTED, YOUNG NOBLEMAN! YOU AND LOKI ARE FREE TO DEPART!


MARK YE WELL MY WORDS! NO GOOD WILL COME OF THE UNSCRUPULOUS LOKI!
THOUGH HE BE NOT YET FULL-GROWN, THE SEED OF EVIL HAS ALREADY TAKEN ROOT!
BUT, SEE HOW LIKE A KING THE GOLDEN ONE WALKS! BY ASGARD, HE IS DESTINED FOR GREATNESS!!

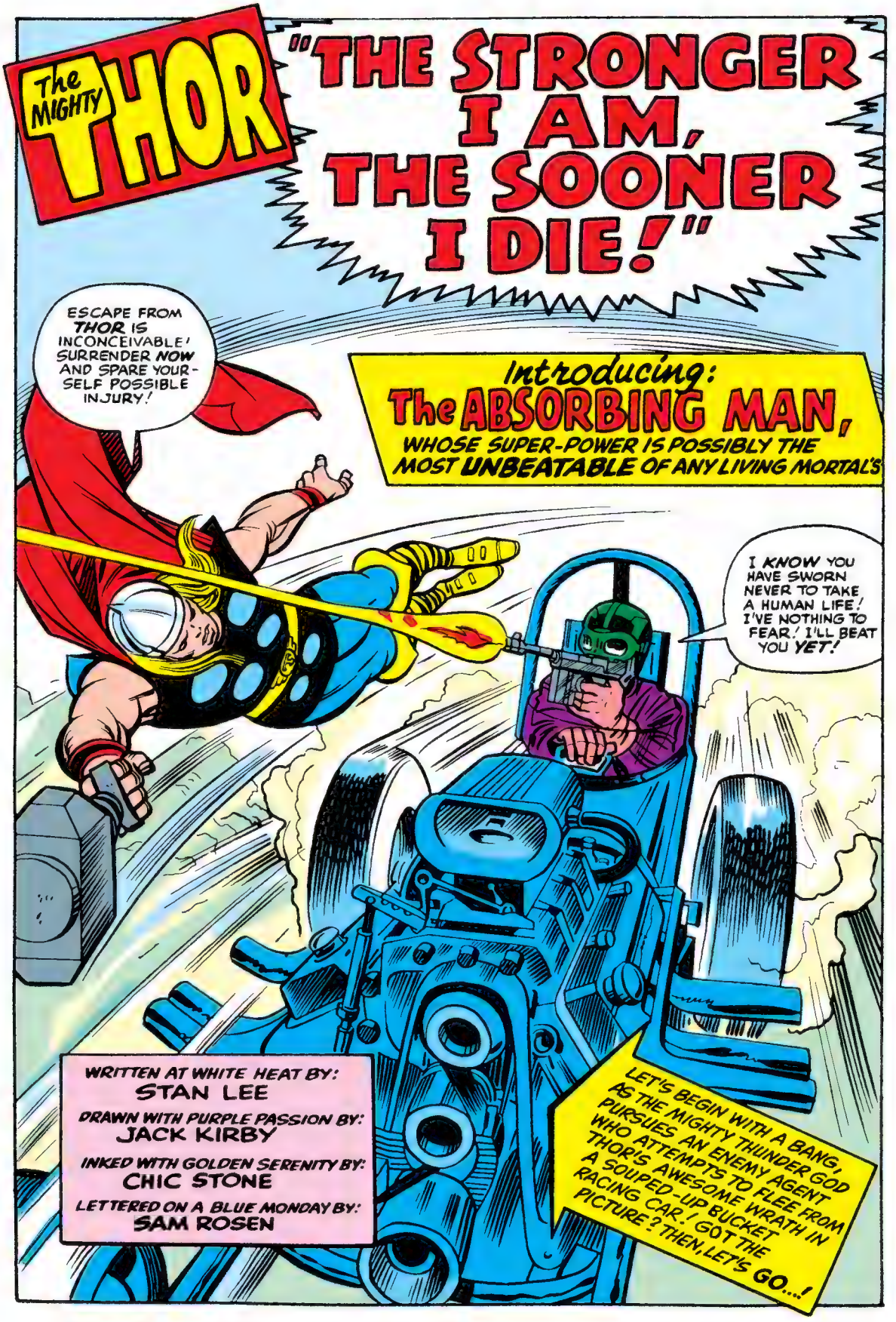
IF THEY WOULD BOW TO ME AS THEY DO TO THOR, I'D FIND A WAY TO GAIN COMPLETE CONTROL OVER THEM! FOR I WAS BORN TO BE SERVED -- TO GIVE COMMANDS!
IT WAS FOOLISH OF YOU TO INTERFERE WITH THE TOURNAMENT, LOKI -- BUT, WHAT IS DONE IS DONE!
IT IS TIME FOR OUR HORSEMANSHIP TRAINING NOW!

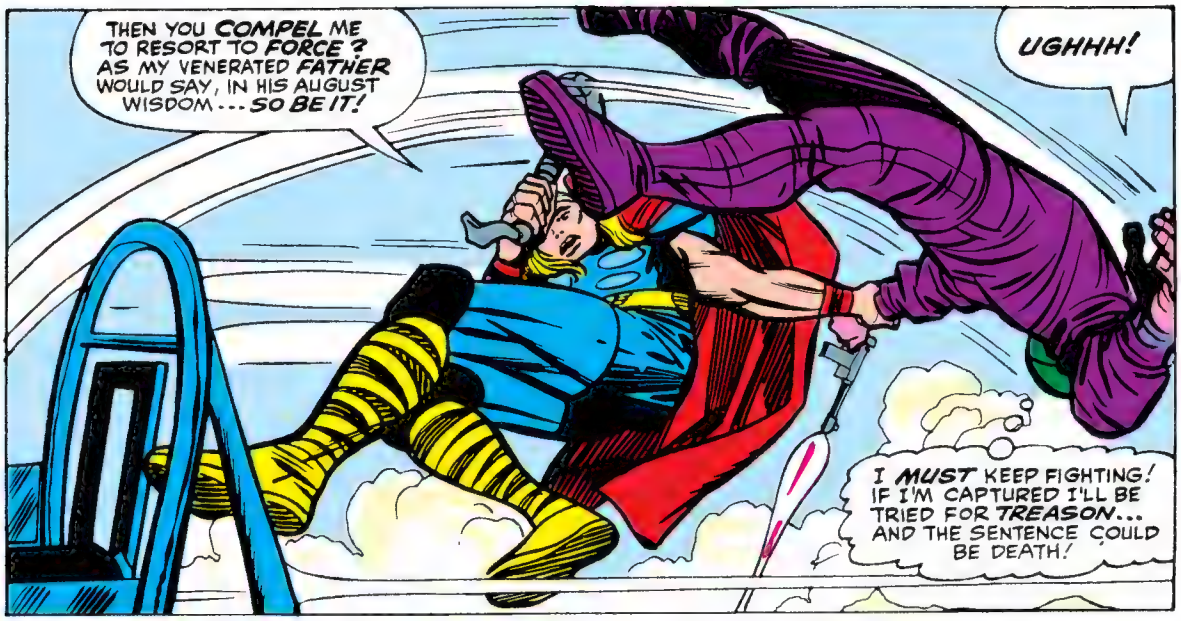

COME ON, LOKI! I'LL RACE YOU TO THE FOOT OF THE RAINBOW BRIDGE!
NO! WHY SHOULD I? YOU HAVE A FASTER STEED!
IT IS NOT ALONE THE HORSE THAT MATTERS -- BUT THE ONE WHOSE HANDS ARE HOLDING THE REINS!

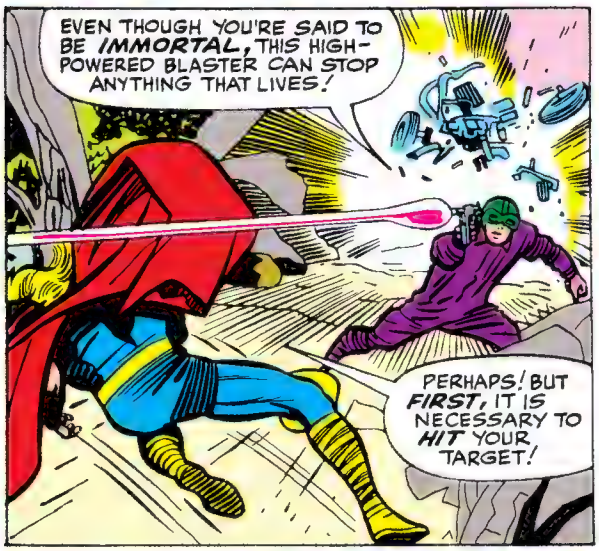
BLAST HIM!! HE DEFEATS ME AT EVERYTHING! SEE HOW HE RIDES -- SMILING -- A SONG ON HIS LIPS -- FOREVER UNBEATEN!
THERE'S THE BRIDGE AHEAD, LOKI! FASTER! TRY HARDER! I'M RACING AWAY FROM YOU!
5

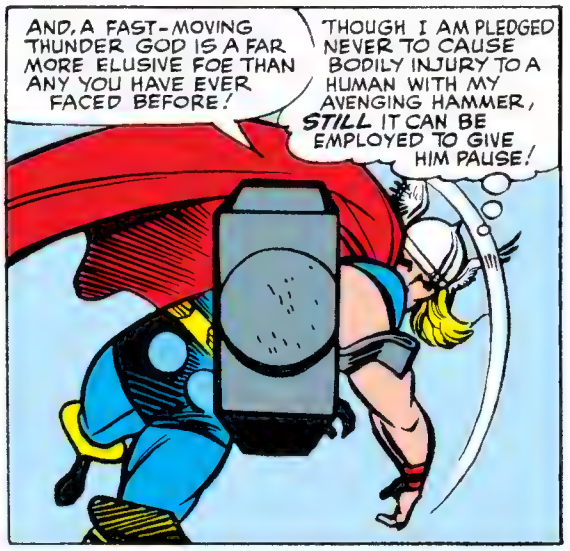

I SHALL TRY HARDER!! I SHALL DEVOTE MY LIFE TO GAINING THE MOST POWER IN ASGARD! AND, I KNOW THAT SOONER OR LATER, IN ORDER TO ATTAIN MY GOAL, THOR MUST BE DESTROYED!!
THE END
AND SO IT BEGINS -- THE DARK, ETERNAL HATRED WHICH LOKI FEELS FOR HIS HALF-BROTHER, THOR! A HATRED WHICH HAS LIVED THRU THE AGES -- AND WHICH CAN NEVER BE DIMMED SO LONG AS THE THUNDER GOD LIVES! ANOTHER CHAPTER IN THIS WIDELY-HERALDED SERIES WILL APPEAR NEXT ISSUE -- BUT WE WON'T ENJOY IT UNLESS YOU SHARE IT WITH US!

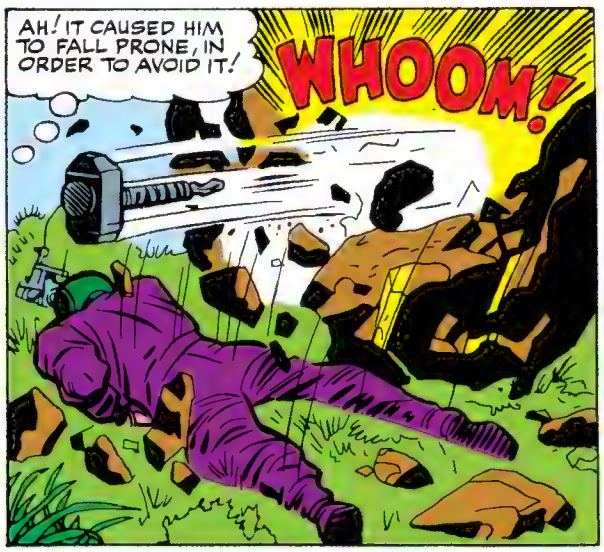
JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY
WITH
THE MIGHTY
THOR
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
IND.
MARVEL COMICS GROUP 12¢
THE START OF ANOTHER UNFORGETTABLE SUPER-EPIC!
FOR THE FIRST TIME IN RECORDED HISTORY, THE TITANIC THUNDER GOD BATTLES A DEADLY FOE WHO HAS EVERY BIT OF RAW STRENGTH, EVERY SINGLE SUPER-POWER WHICH THOR HIMSELF POSSESSES! YOU'LL NEVER FORGET THIS STARTLING SHOCKER!
114
MAR
"THE STRONGER I AM, THE SOONER I DIE!"
THE M.M.M.S. WANTS YOU!

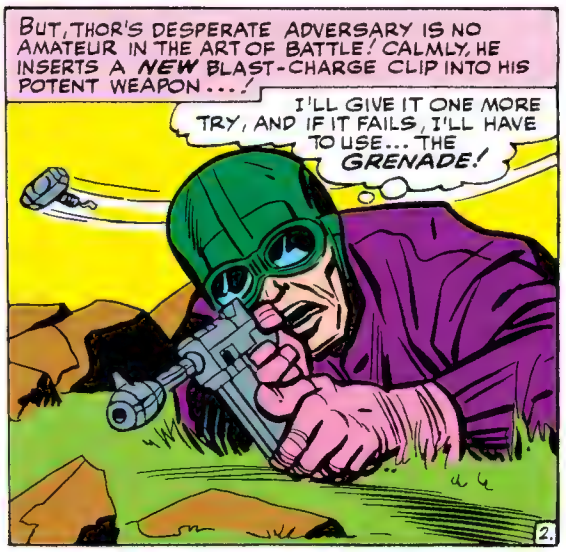

The MIGHTY THOR
"THE STRONGER I AM, THE SOONER I DIE!"
ESCAPE FROM THOR IS INCONCEIVABLE! SURRENDER NOW AND SPARE YOURSELF POSSIBLE INJURY!
Introducing: The ABSORBING MAN, WHOSE SUPER-POWER IS POSSIBLY THE MOST UNBEATABLE OF ANY LIVING MORTAL'S
I KNOW YOU HAVE SWORN NEVER TO TAKE A HUMAN LIFE! I'VE NOTHING TO FEAR! I'LL BEAT YOU YET!
WRITTEN AT WHITE HEAT BY: STAN LEE
DRAWN WITH PURPLE PASSION BY: JACK KIRBY
INKED WITH GOLDEN SERENITY BY: CHIC STONE
LETTERED ON A BLUE MONDAY BY: SAM ROSEN
LET'S BEGIN WITH A BANG, AS THE MIGHTY THUNDER GOD PURSUES AN ENEMY AGENT WHO ATTEMPTS TO FLEE FROM THOR'S AWESOME WRATH IN A SOUPED-UP BUCKET RACING CAR! GOT THE PICTURE? THEN, LET'S GO...!

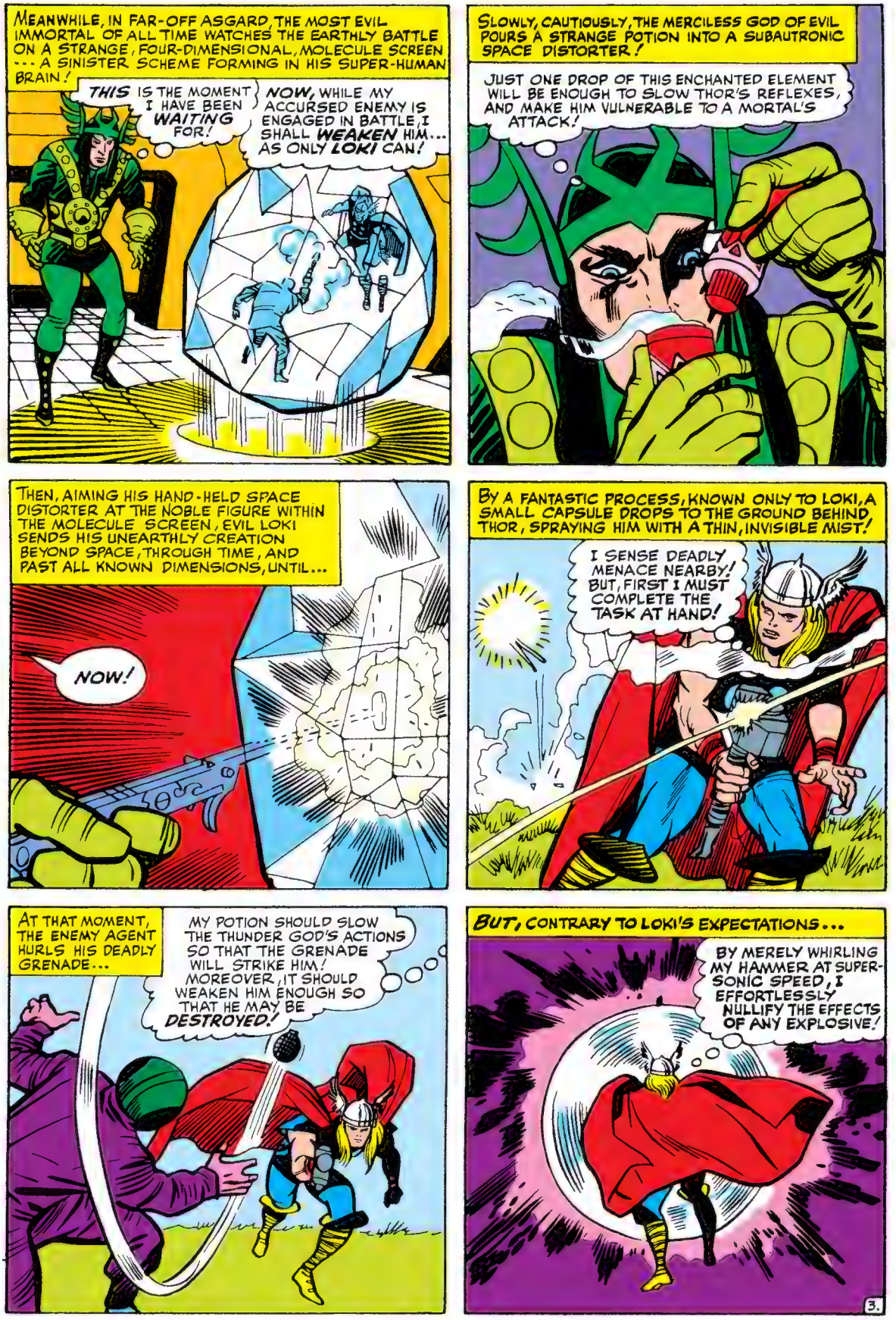

THEN YOU COMPEL ME TO RESORT TO FORCE? AS MY VENERATED FATHER WOULD SAY, IN HIS AUGUST WISDOM--- SO BE IT!
UGHHH!
I MUST KEEP FIGHTING! IF I'M CAPTURED I'LL BE TRIED FOR TREASON... AND THE SENTENCE COULD BE DEATH!


EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE SAID TO BE IMMORTAL, THIS HIGH-POWERED BLASTER CAN STOP ANYTHING THAT LIVES!
PERHAPS! BUT FIRST, IT IS NECESSARY TO HIT YOUR TARGET!

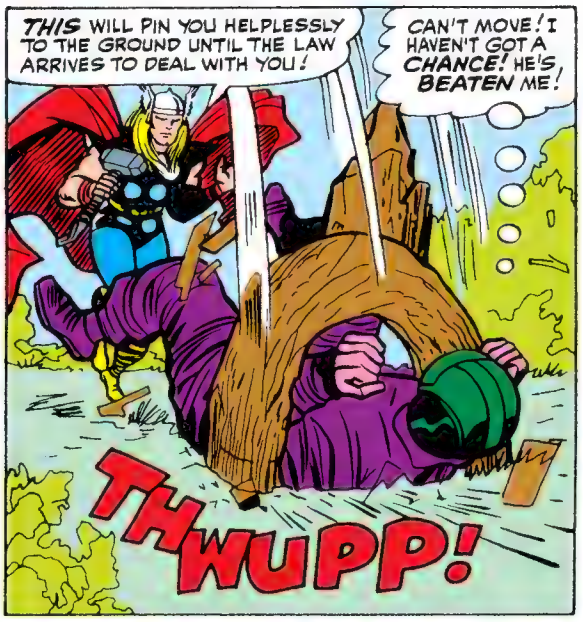

AND, A FAST-MOVING THUNDER GOD IS A FAR MORE ELUSIVE FOE THAN ANY YOU HAVE EVER FACED BEFORE!
THOUGH I AM PLEDGED NEVER TO CAUSE BODILY INJURY TO A HUMAN WITH MY AVENGING HAMMER, STILL IT CAN BE EMPLOYED TO GIVE HIM PAUSE!

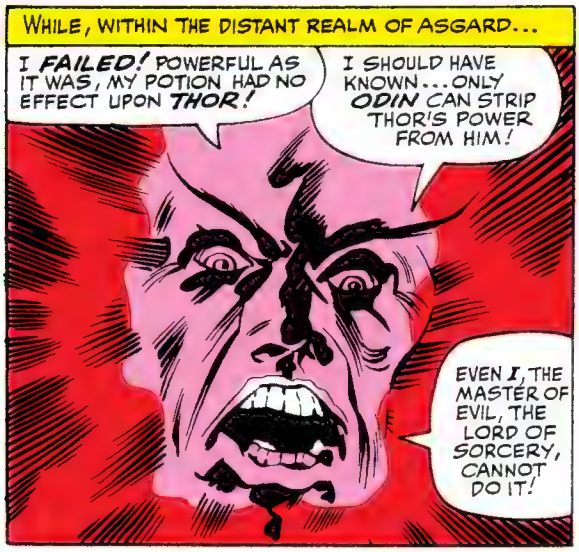

AH! IT CAUSED HIM TO FALL PRONE, IN ORDER TO AVOID IT!
WHOOM!


BUT, THOR'S DESPERATE ADVERSARY IS NO AMATEUR IN THE ART OF BATTLE! CALMLY, HE INSERTS A NEW BLAST-CHARGE CLIP INTO HIS POTENT WEAPON...!
I'LL GIVE IT ONE MORE TRY, AND IF IT FAILS, I'LL HAVE TO USE... THE GRENADE!

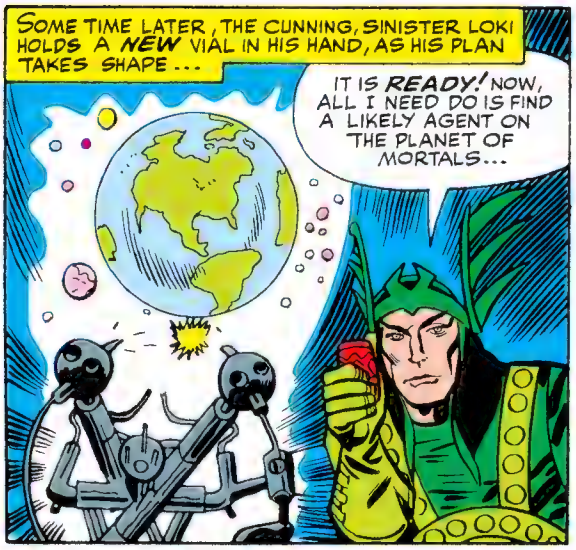

MEANWHILE, IN FAR-OFF ASGARD, THE MOST EVIL IMMORTAL OF ALL TIME WATCHES THE EARTHLY BATTLE ON A STRANGE, FOUR-DIMENSIONAL, MOLECULE SCREEN --- A SINISTER SCHEME FORMING IN HIS SUPER-HUMAN BRAIN!
THIS IS THE MOMENT I HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR!
NOW, WHILE MY ACCURSED ENEMY IS ENGAGED IN BATTLE, I SHALL WEAKEN HIM... AS ONLY LOKI CAN!
SLOWLY, CAUTIOUSLY, THE MERCILESS GOD OF EVIL POURS A STRANGE POTION INTO A SUBAUTRONIC SPACE DISTORTER!
JUST ONE DROP OF THIS ENCHANTED ELEMENT WILL BE ENOUGH TO SLOW THOR'S REFLEXES, AND MAKE HIM VULNERABLE TO A MORTAL'S ATTACK!
THEN, AIMING HIS HAND-HELD SPACE DISTORTER AT THE NOBLE FIGURE WITHIN THE MOLECULE SCREEN, EVIL LOKI SENDS HIS UNEARTHLY CREATION BEYOND SPACE, THROUGH TIME, AND PAST ALL KNOWN DIMENSIONS, UNTIL...
NOW!
BY A FANTASTIC PROCESS, KNOWN ONLY TO LOKI, A SMALL CAPSULE DROPS TO THE GROUND BEHIND THOR, SPRAYING HIM WITH A THIN, INVISIBLE MIST!
I SENSE DEADLY MENACE NEARBY! BUT, FIRST I MUST COMPLETE THE TASK AT HAND!
AT THAT MOMENT, THE ENEMY AGENT HURLS HIS DEADLY GRENADE...
MY POTION SHOULD SLOW THE THUNDER GOD'S ACTIONS SO THAT THE GRENADE WILL STRIKE HIM! MOREOVER, IT SHOULD WEAKEN HIM ENOUGH SO THAT HE MAY BE DESTROYED!
BUT, CONTRARY TO LOKI'S EXPECTATIONS...
BY MERELY WHIRLING MY HAMMER AT SUPER-SONIC SPEED, I EFFORTLESSLY NULLIFY THE EFFECTS OF ANY EXPLOSIVE!
3.

AND NOW, LET US HAVE DONE WITH THIS CHARADE!
KRAKK!


THIS WILL PIN YOU HELPLESSLY TO THE GROUND UNTIL THE LAW ARRIVES TO DEAL WITH YOU!
CAN'T MOVE! I HAVEN'T GOT A CHANCE! HE'S BEATEN ME!
THWUPP!


WHILE, WITHIN THE DISTANT REALM OF ASGARD...
I FAILED! POWERFUL AS IT WAS, MY POTION HAD NO EFFECT UPON THOR!
I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN... ONLY ODIN CAN STRIP THOR'S POWER FROM HIM!
EVEN I, THE MASTER OF EVIL, THE LORD OF SORCERY, CANNOT DO IT!

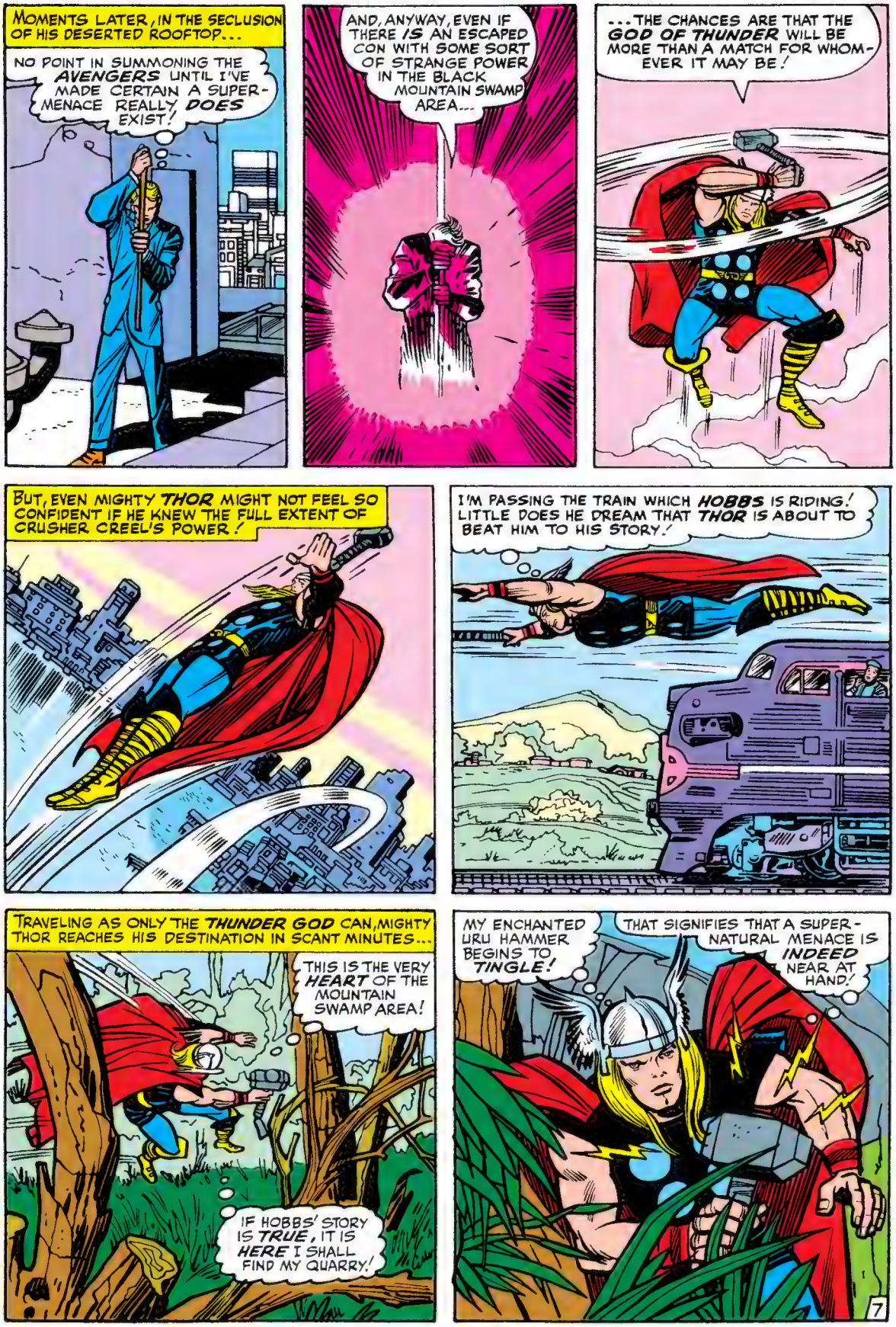
BUT, THERE ARE OTHER WAYS! IF I CANNOT CAUSE THOR TO LOSE HIS POWER... I HAVE THE MEANS TO GIVE POWER TO OTHERS! ALREADY, A SCHEME IS FORMING IN MY MIND!

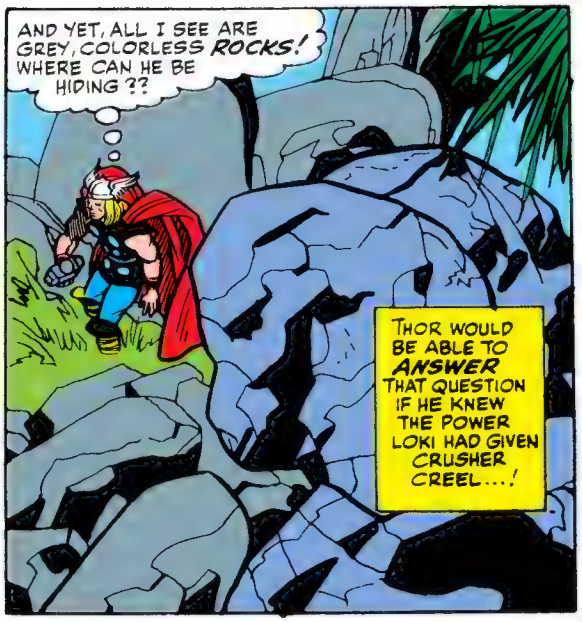

SOME TIME LATER, THE CUNNING, SINISTER LOKI HOLDS A NEW VIAL IN HIS HAND, AS HIS PLAN TAKES SHAPE...
IT IS READY! NOW, ALL I NEED DO IS FIND A LIKELY AGENT ON THE PLANET OF MORTALS...

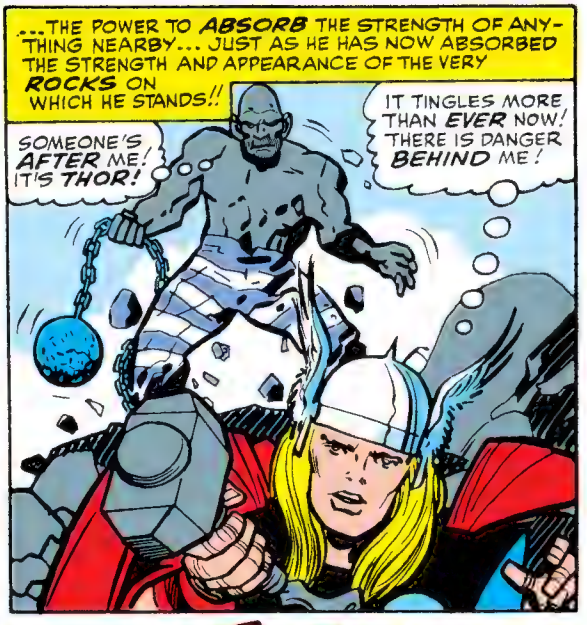
THERE IS A PERFECT SUBJECT! BRUTAL, SAVAGE, CONSUMED WITH HATRED FOR SOCIETY!

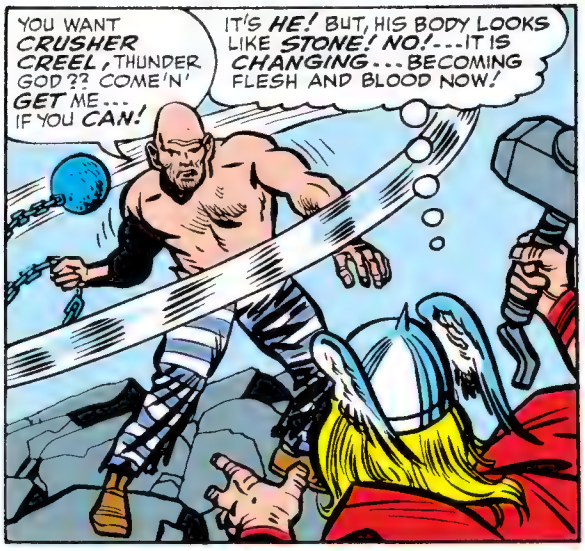
LITTLE DOES HE SUSPECT THAT I HAVE ADDED AN ENCHANTED POTION TO HIS DRINK!
A POTION WHICH WILL MAKE HIM THE MOST DANGEROUS MORTAL ON EARTH WITHIN EXACTLY ONE SECOND! AHHH! HE BEGINS TO FEEL HIS POWER!
NOTHING CAN STOP HIM NOW! ALL I NEED DO IS WATCH... UNTIL HE MEETS THOR... THE ONE HE WILL DESTROY!
WHAT IS THE DREAD POWER WHICH LOKI HAS GIVEN TO THIS CONVICT?? A POWER GREAT ENOUGH TO MENACE THOR!! WE SHALL LEARN IN A MOMENT...
I'M GETTIN' OUT OF HERE! NO JAIL CAN HOLD ME NOW!
HOW ABOUT THAT?! CRUSHER CREEL MUSTA GONE STIR CRAZY!!
24957
DON'T TRY IT, CRUSHER!
LOOK OUT!! HE'S STRONG AS A BULL... AND TWICE AS DANGEROUS!
BUT, THEY ARE ABOUT TO LEARN, TO THEIR AMAZEMENT, THAT THE CON CALLED CRUSHER IS NOT TWICE AS DANGEROUS AS A BULL... HE IS NOW A THOUSAND TIMES MORE DEADLY!
STAND FAST, CRUSHER! DON'T MAKE US SHOOT!
SHOOT ALL YA WANT TO!! NOTHIN' CAN HURT ME!
THEN, AS THE MADDENED CON WEILDS HIS BALL AND CHAIN LIKE A DEADLY MALLET, THE GUARDS HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO FIRE!
LOOK! HIS BODY!! IT... IT'S CHANGED!
IT'S TURNED TO STEEL!! LIKE OUR BULLETS!
THE SHELLS ARE BOUNCING OFF HIM!
5.

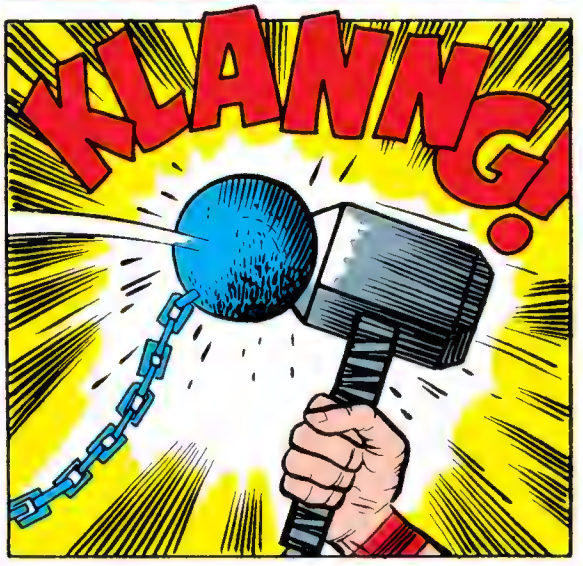
NEXT, AS THE DAZED GUARDS CALL FOR MORE POWERFUL WEAPONS, THE MAN KNOWN AS CRUSHER EFFORTLESSLY SMASHES THROUGH THE STONE WALL INTO THE YARD..!
IT'S LIKE BUSTIN' THROUGH A PAPER BAG!! ONE MORE WALL AND I'LL BE FREE!
BEFORE GOING ANY FURTHER, WE WANT TO WARN YOU THAT CRUSHER CREEL'S POWER IS NOT MERELY A STEEL BODY! IT'S SOMETHING FAR FAR MORE! BUT, NOW, LET'S VISIT THE OFFICE OF DR. DON BLAKE..
YOU SAY YOU'RE A REPORTER? HOW DID YOU HURT YOUR ARM THAT WAY, MR. HOBBS?
I SLIPPED ON A BANANA PEEL WHILE RUNNING FOR A TRAIN, DOC! I WAS IN TOO BIG A HURRY!
IT WILL BE ALL RIGHT NOW!
THANKS, DOC! I'VE GOT TO RUSH AND TRY TO CATCH THE NEXT TRAIN NOW!
I'M HOT ON THE TRAIL OF AN ESCAPED CON WITH SUPER-HUMAN POWERS! IF I CAN CHECK IT OUT, IT'LL BE GOOD FOR THE FRONT PAGE!
IS THAT SO?
IF I FIND MY MAN, I'LL DROP YOU A CARD FROM THE BLACK MOUNTAIN SWAMP AREA, WHERE HE'S HIDING!
GOOD LUCK, MR. HOBBS! AND TRY NOT TO STRAIN THAT ARM!
AN ESCAPED CON WITH SUPER POWERS! THAT SOUNDS VERY INTERESTING!
I'M GLAD YOUR LAST PATIENT IS GONE! I'M HUNGRY AS A BEAR!
OH, NO! I FORGOT! I WAS SUPPOSED TO TAKE JANE TO DINNER, TONIGHT.
BUTTON NOSE, WOULD YOU MIND GIVING ME A RAIN CHECK ON OUR DINNER DATE? I, EH, HAVE SOME RATHER IMPORTANT RESEARCH TO CARRY OUT BEFORE MORNING!
VERY WELL, DARLING! BUT, IF I EVER FALL IN LOVE WITH A DOCTOR AGAIN, I'LL RUN FOR THE HILLS!
6

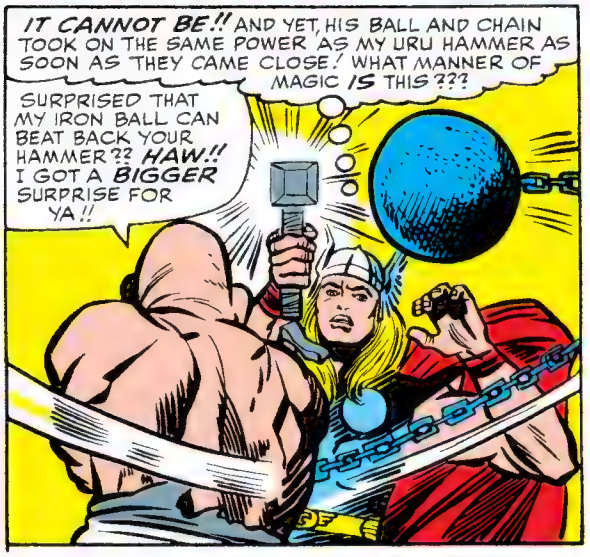

MOMENTS LATER, IN THE SECLUSION OF HIS DESERTED ROOFTOP...
NO POINT IN SUMMONING THE AVENGERS UNTIL I'VE MADE CERTAIN A SUPER-MENACE REALLY DOES EXIST!
AND, ANYWAY, EVEN IF THERE IS AN ESCAPED CON WITH SOME SORT OF STRANGE POWER IN THE BLACK MOUNTAIN SWAMP AREA...
...THE CHANCES ARE THAT THE GOD OF THUNDER WILL BE MORE THAN A MATCH FOR WHOM-EVER IT MAY BE!
BUT, EVEN MIGHTY THOR MIGHT NOT FEEL SO CONFIDENT IF HE KNEW THE FULL EXTENT OF CRUSHER CREEL'S POWER!
I'M PASSING THE TRAIN WHICH HOBBS IS RIDING! LITTLE DOES HE DREAM THAT THOR IS ABOUT TO BEAT HIM TO HIS STORY!
TRAVELING AS ONLY THE THUNDER GOD CAN, MIGHTY THOR REACHES HIS DESTINATION IN SCANT MINUTES...
THIS IS THE VERY HEART OF THE MOUNTAIN SWAMP AREA!
IF HOBBS' STORY IS TRUE, IT IS HERE I SHALL FIND MY QUARRY!
MY ENCHANTED URU HAMMER BEGINS TO TINGLE!
THAT SIGNIFIES THAT A SUPER-NATURAL MENACE IS INDEED NEAR AT HAND!
7

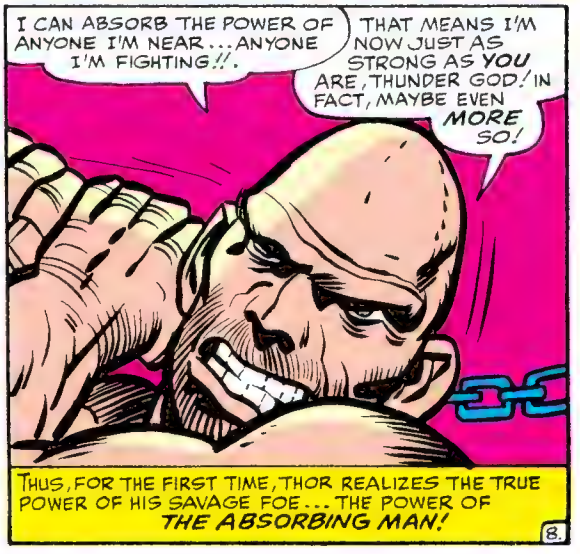

AND YET, ALL I SEE ARE GREY, COLORLESS ROCKS! WHERE CAN HE BE HIDING ??
THOR WOULD BE ABLE TO ANSWER THAT QUESTION IF HE KNEW THE POWER LOKI HAD GIVEN CRUSHER CREEL...!


...THE POWER TO ABSORB THE STRENGTH OF ANYTHING NEARBY... JUST AS HE HAS NOW ABSORBED THE STRENGTH AND APPEARANCE OF THE VERY ROCKS ON WHICH HE STANDS!!
SOMEONE'S AFTER ME! IT'S THOR!
IT TINGLES MORE THAN EVER NOW! THERE IS DANGER BEHIND ME!

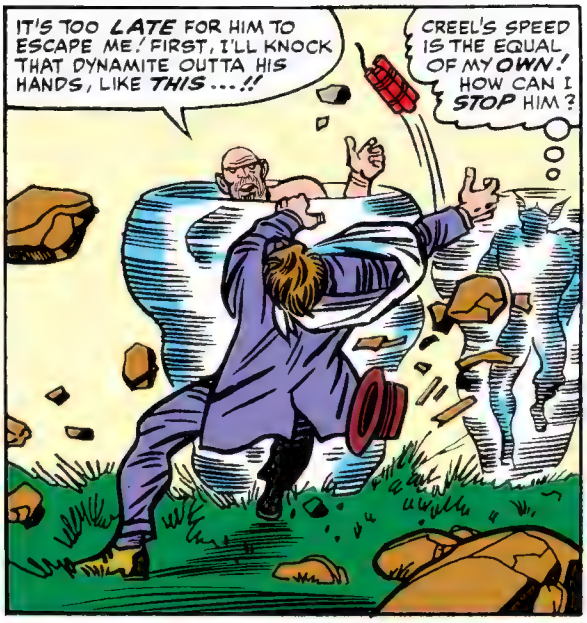

YOU WANT CRUSHER CREEL, THUNDER GOD?? COME'N' GET ME... IF YOU CAN!
IT'S HE! BUT, HIS BODY LOOKS LIKE STONE! NO!---IT IS CHANGING... BECOMING FLESH AND BLOOD NOW!

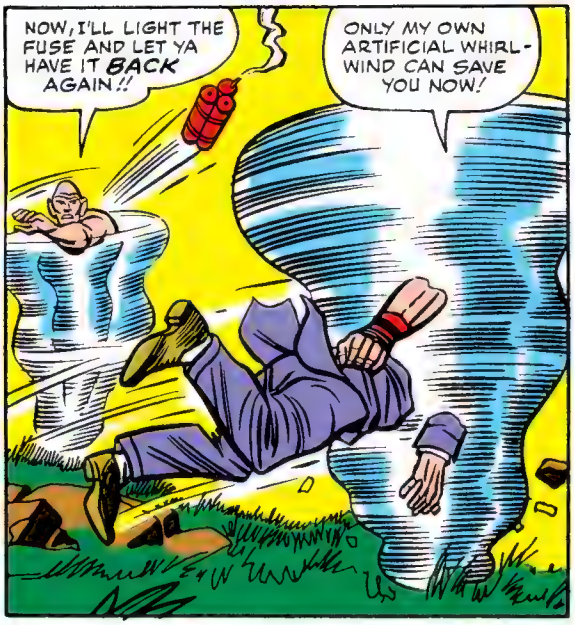

KLANNG!


IT CANNOT BE!! AND YET, HIS BALL AND CHAIN TOOK ON THE SAME POWER AS MY URU HAMMER AS SOON AS THEY CAME CLOSE! WHAT MANNER OF MAGIC IS THIS???
SURPRISED THAT MY IRON BALL CAN BEAT BACK YOUR HAMMER?? HAW!! I GOT A BIGGER SURPRISE FOR YA!!

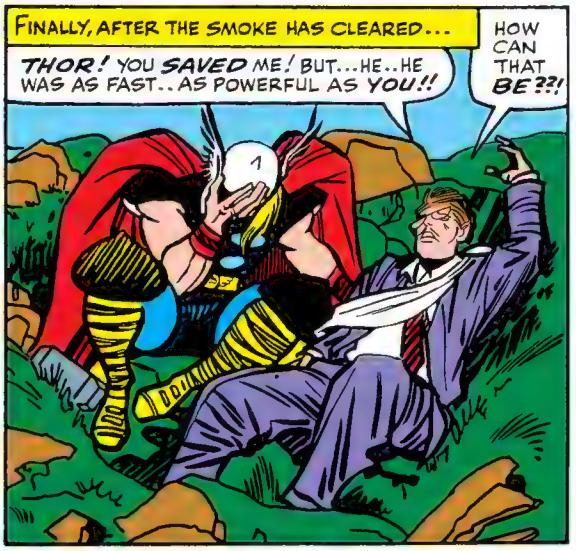

I CAN ABSORB THE POWER OF ANYONE I'M NEAR... ANYONE I'M FIGHTING!!.
THAT MEANS I'M NOW JUST AS STRONG AS YOU ARE, THUNDER GOD! IN FACT, MAYBE EVEN MORE SO!
THUS, FOR THE FIRST TIME, THOR REALIZES THE TRUE POWER OF HIS SAVAGE FOE... THE POWER OF THE ABSORBING MAN!

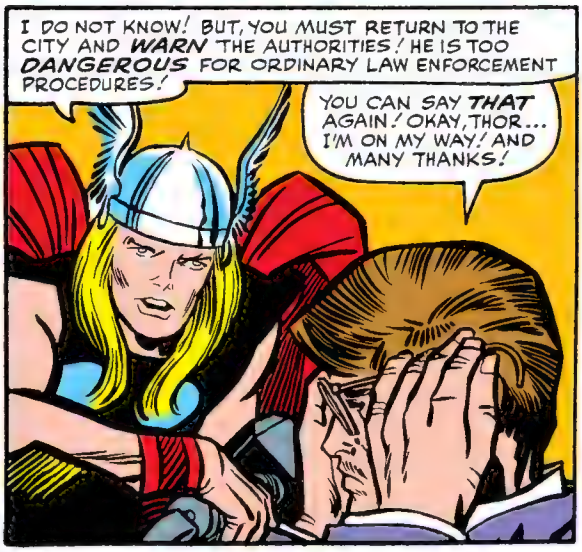
ON AND ON THE BATTLE RAGES, WITH THE ABSORBING MAN DUPLICATING EVERY FANTASTIC FEAT OF THE MIGHTY ADVERSARY HE IS FIGHTING...!
MY STRENGTH HAS BECOME HIS STRENGTH! AND MY HAMMER'S POWER IS MATCHED BY HIS BALL AND CHAIN!
PERHAPS I CAN HURL HIS WEAPON FROM HIM BY CREATING A SUDDEN WHIRLWIND!
BUT, HAVING THE SAME POWER AS THOR, THE ABSORBING MAN MERELY DUPLICATES THE THUNDER GOD'S FEAT!
I'VE FOUND HIM AT LAST!
THEN, AT THAT MOMENT, THE REPORTER, HOBBS, ENTERS THE SCENE...
LUCKY I BROUGHT SOME OF THESE DYNAMITE STICKS WITH ME, IN CASE I NEEDED THEM!
WHAT A SCOOP THIS'LL BE FOR OL' HOBBS!
DROP THAT BALL AND CHAIN, CREEL! SURRENDER, OR I'LL THROW THIS T.N.T.!
THROW IT, YOU FOOL! SEE HOW MUCH GOOD IT'LL DO YA!
GO BACK!! FLEE FOR YOUR LIFE! HE IS MORE DANGEROUS THAN YOU CAN IMAGINE!
9.

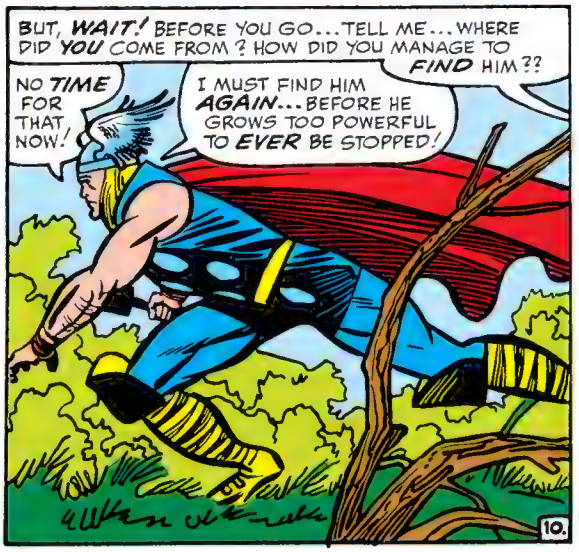

IT'S TOO LATE FOR HIM TO ESCAPE ME! FIRST, I'LL KNOCK THAT DYNAMITE OUTTA HIS HANDS, LIKE THIS...!!
CREEL'S SPEED IS THE EQUAL OF MY OWN! HOW CAN I STOP HIM?

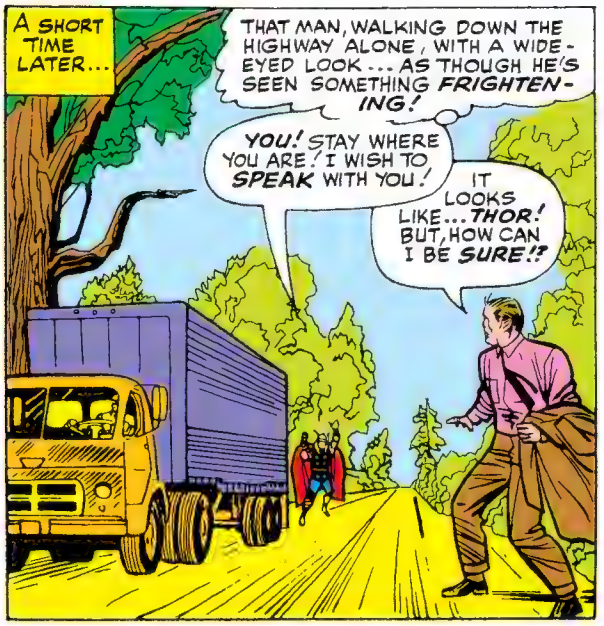

NOW, I'LL LIGHT THE FUSE AND LET YA HAVE IT BACK AGAIN!!
ONLY MY OWN ARTIFICIAL WHIRL-WIND CAN SAVE YOU NOW!

WHOOOM

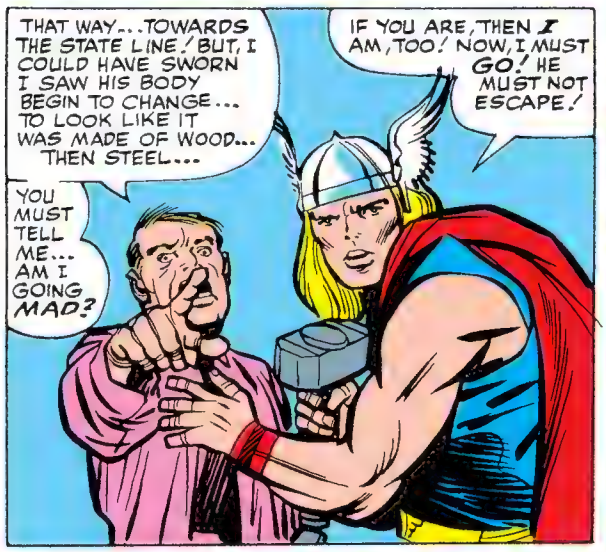

FINALLY, AFTER THE SMOKE HAS CLEARED...
THOR! YOU SAVED ME! BUT...HE..HE WAS AS FAST..AS POWERFUL AS YOU!!
HOW CAN THAT BE??!

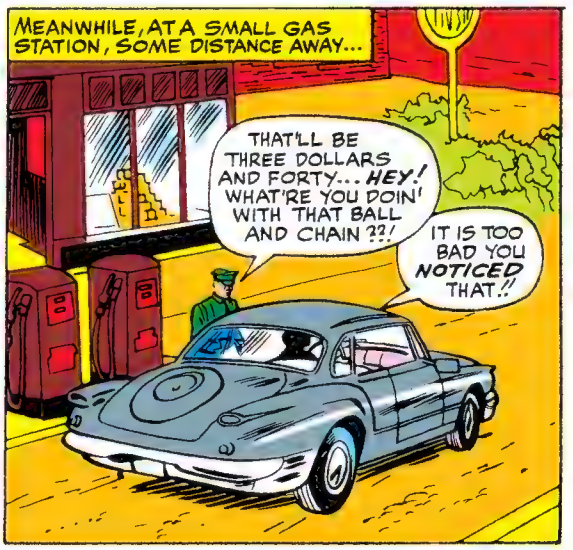

I DO NOT KNOW! BUT, YOU MUST RETURN TO THE CITY AND WARN THE AUTHORITIES! HE IS TOO DANGEROUS FOR ORDINARY LAW ENFORCEMENT PROCEDURES!
YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN! OKAY, THOR... I'M ON MY WAY! AND MANY THANKS!

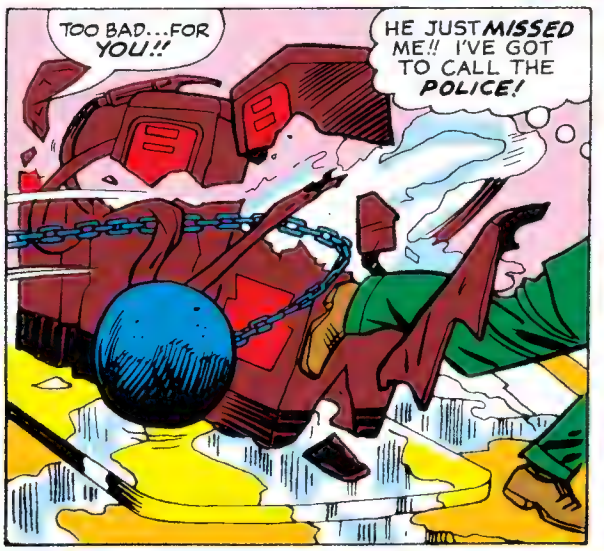

BUT, WAIT! BEFORE YOU GO...TELL ME...WHERE DID YOU COME FROM? HOW DID YOU MANAGE TO FIND HIM??
NO TIME FOR THAT, NOW!
I MUST FIND HIM AGAIN...BEFORE HE GROWS TOO POWERFUL TO EVER BE STOPPED!

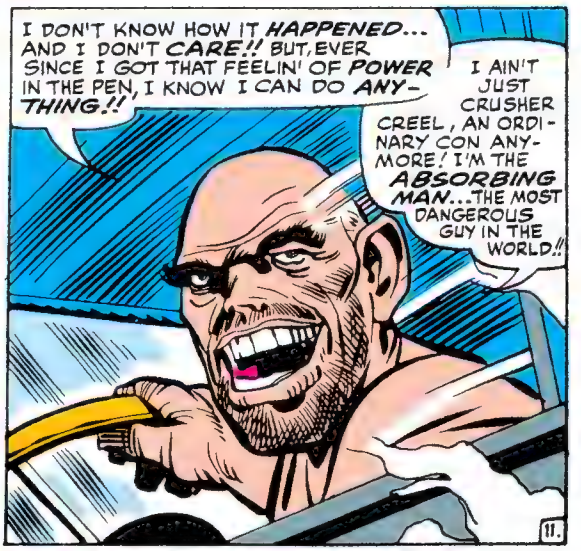

A SHORT TIME LATER...
THAT MAN, WALKING DOWN THE HIGHWAY ALONE, WITH A WIDE-EYED LOOK... AS THOUGH HE'S SEEN SOMETHING FRIGHTENING!
YOU! STAY WHERE YOU ARE! I WISH TO SPEAK WITH YOU!
IT LOOKS LIKE... THOR! BUT, HOW CAN I BE SURE!?

AFTER WHAT I JUST SAW, I CAN'T BE SURE OF ANYTHING!! HE WAS STRONG AS THE HULK! THREW ME OUT OF MY OWN CAR, AND DROVE OFF IN IT... LAUGHING LIKE A DEMON!!
WAIT! IT IS HE WHOM I SEEK! YOU MUST TELL ME WHICH WAY HE WENT!

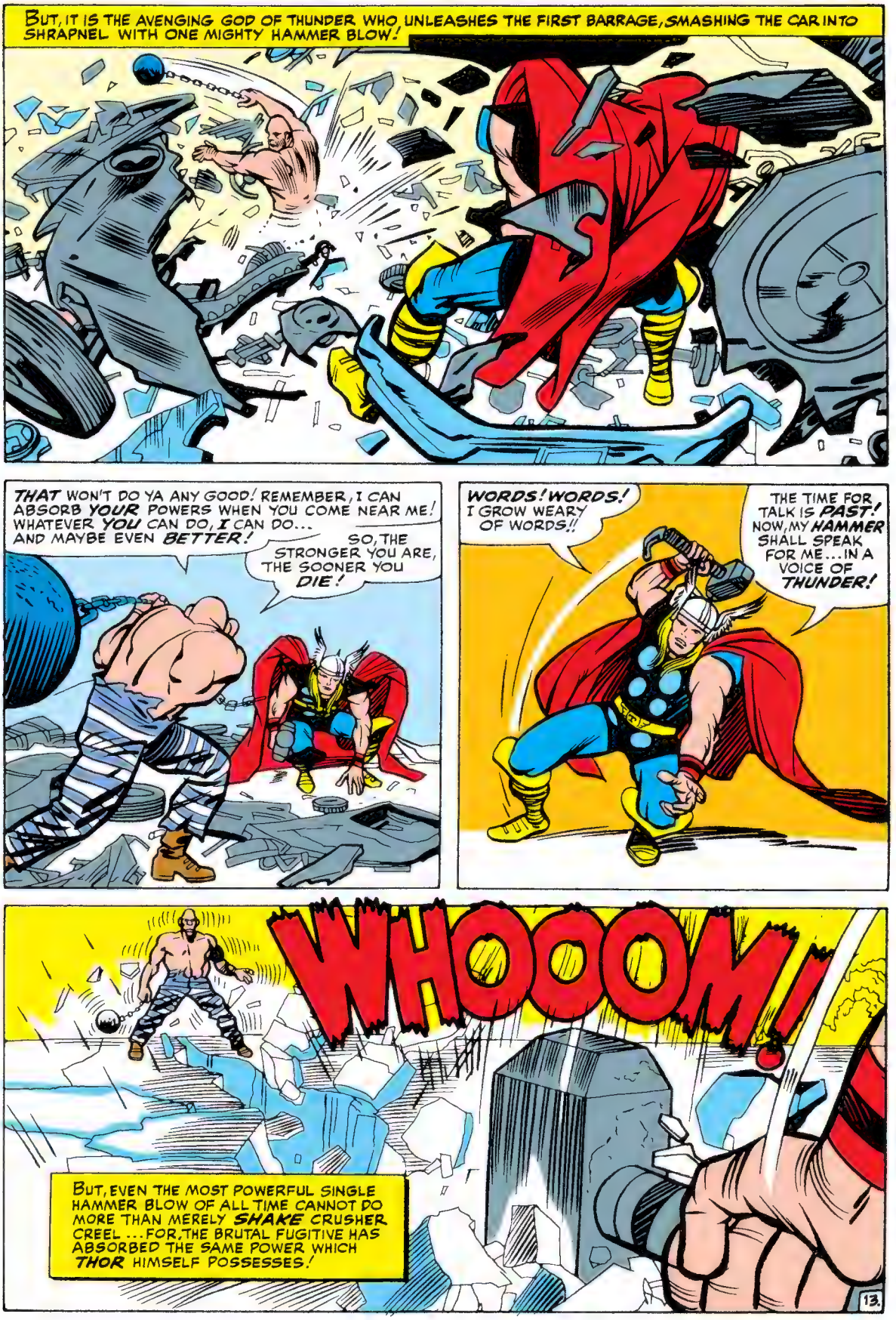

THAT WAY... TOWARDS THE STATE LINE! BUT, I COULD HAVE SWORN I SAW HIS BODY BEGIN TO CHANGE... TO LOOK LIKE IT WAS MADE OF WOOD... THEN STEEL...
IF YOU ARE, THEN I AM, TOO! NOW, I MUST GO! HE MUST NOT ESCAPE!
YOU MUST TELL ME... AM I GOING MAD?

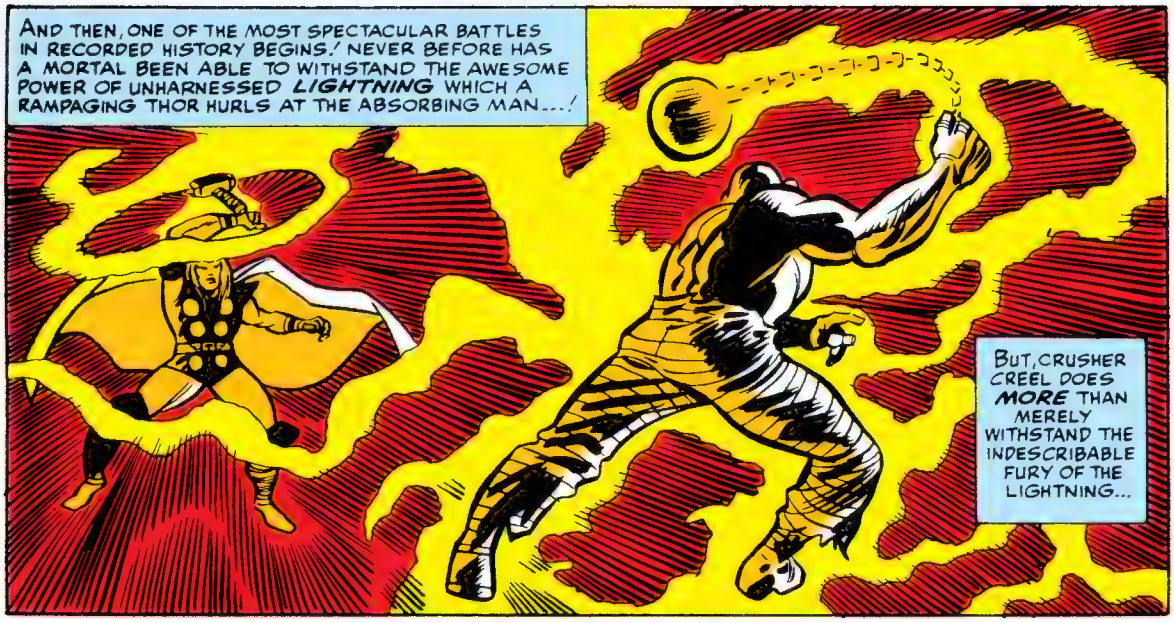

MEANWHILE, AT A SMALL GAS STATION, SOME DISTANCE AWAY...
THAT'LL BE THREE DOLLARS AND FORTY... HEY! WHAT'RE YOU DOIN' WITH THAT BALL AND CHAIN??!
IT IS TOO BAD YOU NOTICED THAT!!

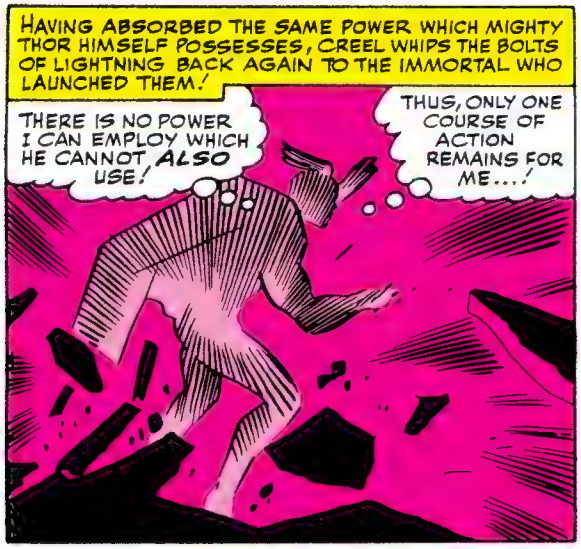

TOO BAD... FOR YOU!!
HE JUST MISSED ME!! I'VE GOT TO CALL THE POLICE!

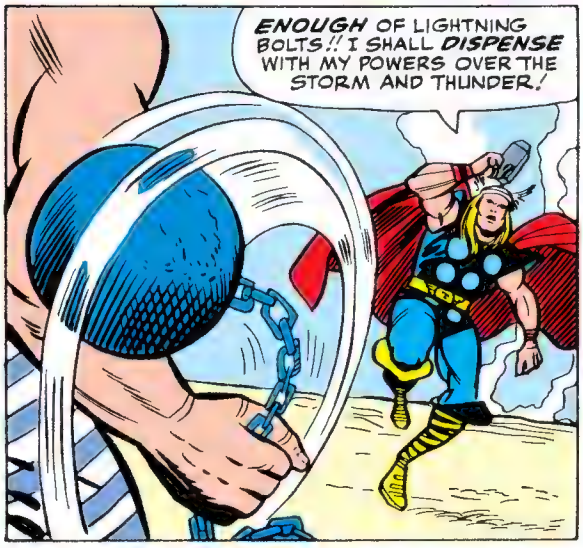

I DON'T KNOW HOW IT HAPPENED... AND I DON'T CARE!! BUT, EVER SINCE I GOT THAT FEELIN' OF POWER IN THE PEN, I KNOW I CAN DO ANYTHING!!
I AIN'T JUST CRUSHER CREEL, AN ORDINARY CON ANYMORE! I'M THE ABSORBING MAN... THE MOST DANGEROUS GUY IN THE WORLD!!

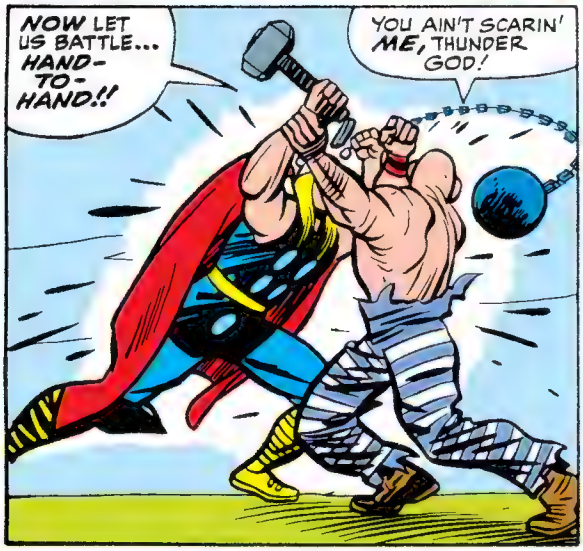
I CAN USE MY BALL AND CHAIN JUST LIKE THOR USES HIS HAMMER! IT CAN SMASH THROUGH ANYTHING!
"I'LL BE ABLE TO BREAK IN ANYWHERE I WANT TO... ROB WHAT I PLEASE... I'M TOO STRONG FOR ANYONE TO STOP!"
WHEN I'M NEAR A STEEL FILING CABINET, MY BODY TURNS TO STEEL!
"I'LL EVEN FIND MYSELF A LITTLE COUNTRY SOMEWHERE, AND TAKE IT OVER! IF BULLETS CAN'T HURT ME, I CAN SMASH MY WAY THROUGH A WHOLE ARMY!"
WHEN I'M NEAR ARMORED TANKS, MY BODY BECOMES ARMORED, TOO!
"I'LL BECOME A DICTATOR! AND THEN, IF THAT GETS TOO BORING, I MAY DECIDE TO TAKE OVER THE WHOLE WORLD! I'LL BE THE EMPEROR OF EARTH!"
HAIL TO OUR MIGHTY LEADER!
SILENCE, DOGS! I GOT SOMETHIN' TO SAY!
ALL HAIL THE ABSORBING MAN!
BUT, CRUSHER CREEL'S SAVAGE DAYDREAMS SOON COME TO AN ABRUPT HALT, AS HE SEES...
IT'S THOR!! HE MANAGED TO FIND ME AGAIN!
WELL, THAT'S HIS HARD LUCK! THIS TIME I'LL FINISH 'IM OFF FOR GOOD!
12.

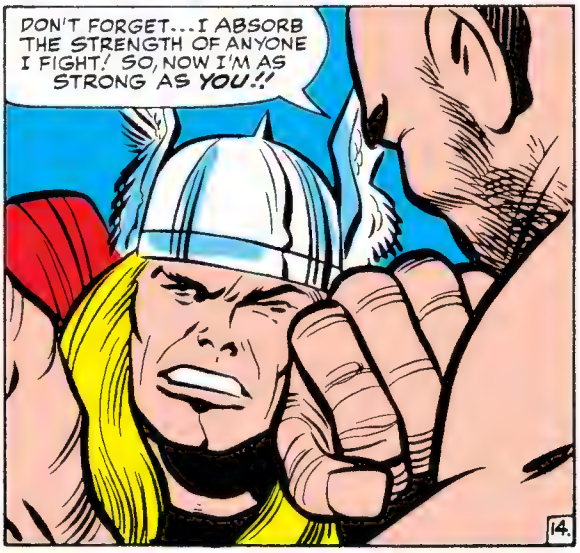

BUT, IT IS THE AVENGING GOD OF THUNDER WHO UNLEASHES THE FIRST BARRAGE, SMASHING THE CAR INTO SHRAPNEL WITH ONE MIGHTY HAMMER BLOW!
THAT WON'T DO YA ANY GOOD! REMEMBER, I CAN ABSORB YOUR POWERS WHEN YOU COME NEAR ME! WHATEVER YOU CAN DO, I CAN DO... AND MAYBE EVEN BETTER!
SO, THE STRONGER YOU ARE, THE SOONER YOU DIE!
WORDS! WORDS! I GROW WEARY OF WORDS!!
THE TIME FOR TALK IS PAST! NOW, MY HAMMER SHALL SPEAK FOR ME... IN A VOICE OF THUNDER!
WHOOOM!!
BUT, EVEN THE MOST POWERFUL SINGLE HAMMER BLOW OF ALL TIME CANNOT DO MORE THAN MERELY SHAKE CRUSHER CREEL... FOR, THE BRUTAL FUGITIVE HAS ABSORBED THE SAME POWER WHICH THOR HIMSELF POSSESSES!
13

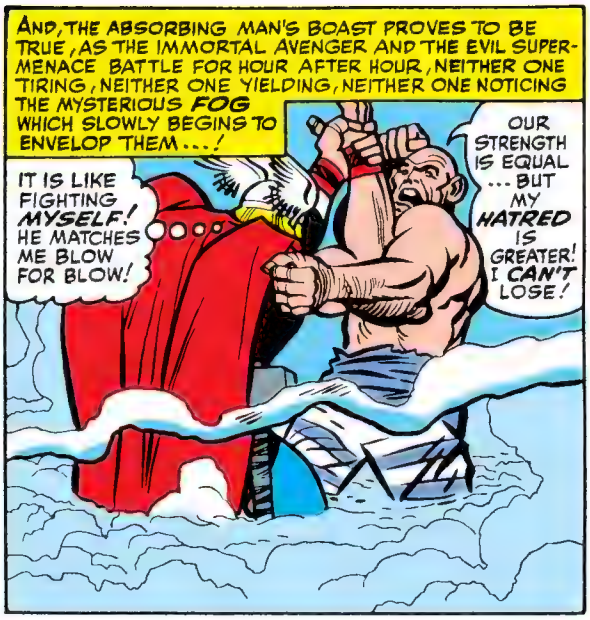

AND THEN, ONE OF THE MOST SPECTACULAR BATTLES IN RECORDED HISTORY BEGINS! NEVER BEFORE HAS A MORTAL BEEN ABLE TO WITHSTAND THE AWESOME POWER OF UNHARNESSED LIGHTNING WHICH A RAMPAGING THOR HURLS AT THE ABSORBING MAN...!
BUT, CRUSHER CREEL DOES MORE THAN MERELY WITHSTAND THE INDESCRIBABLE FURY OF THE LIGHTNING...

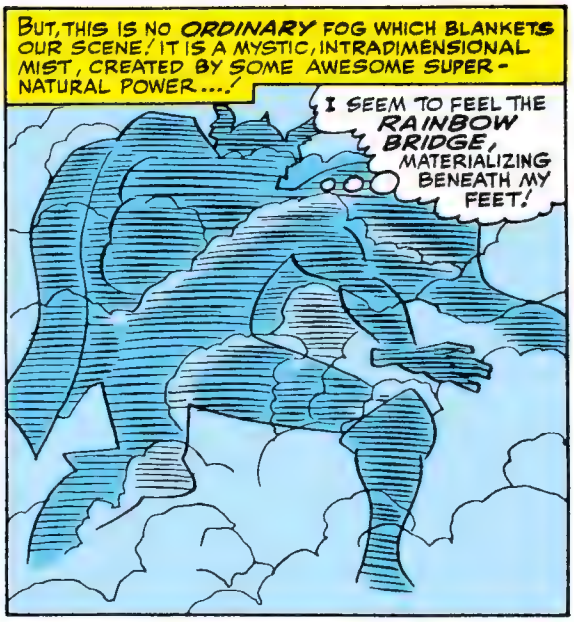

HAVING ABSORBED THE SAME POWER WHICH MIGHTY THOR HIMSELF POSSESSES, CREEL WHIPS THE BOLTS OF LIGHTNING BACK AGAIN TO THE IMMORTAL WHO LAUNCHED THEM!
THERE IS NO POWER I CAN EMPLOY WHICH HE CANNOT ALSO USE!
THUS, ONLY ONE COURSE OF ACTION REMAINS FOR ME...!

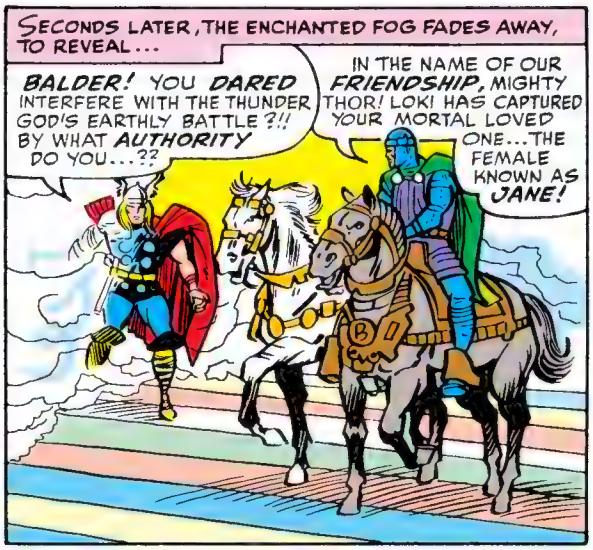

ENOUGH OF LIGHTNING BOLTS!! I SHALL DISPENSE WITH MY POWERS OVER THE STORM AND THUNDER!

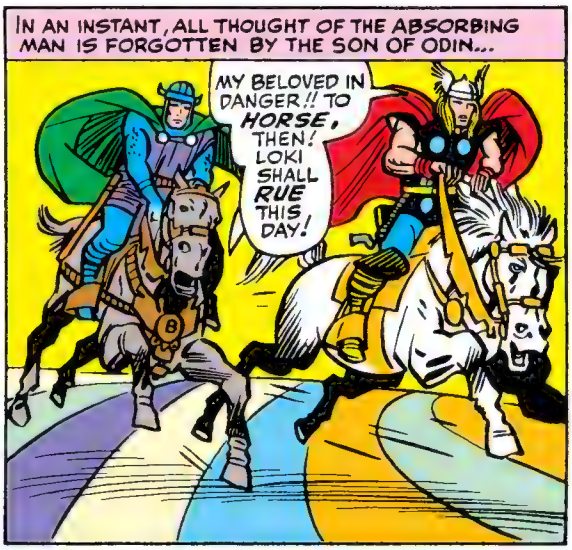

NOW LET US BATTLE... HAND-TO-HAND!!
YOU AIN'T SCARIN' ME, THUNDER GOD!

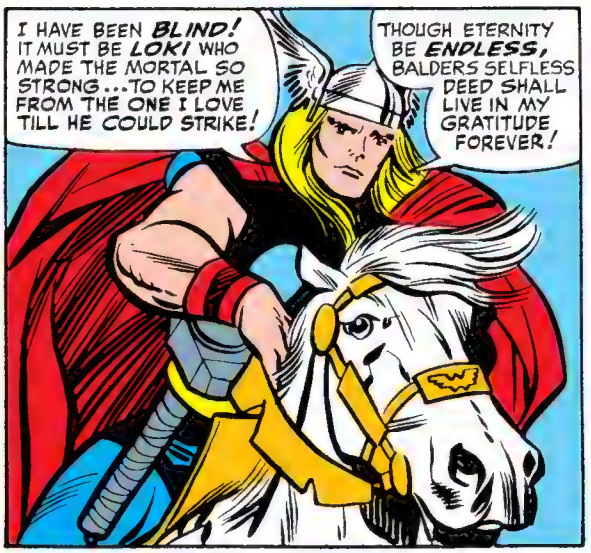

DON'T FORGET... I ABSORB THE STRENGTH OF ANYONE I FIGHT! SO, NOW I'M AS STRONG AS YOU!!

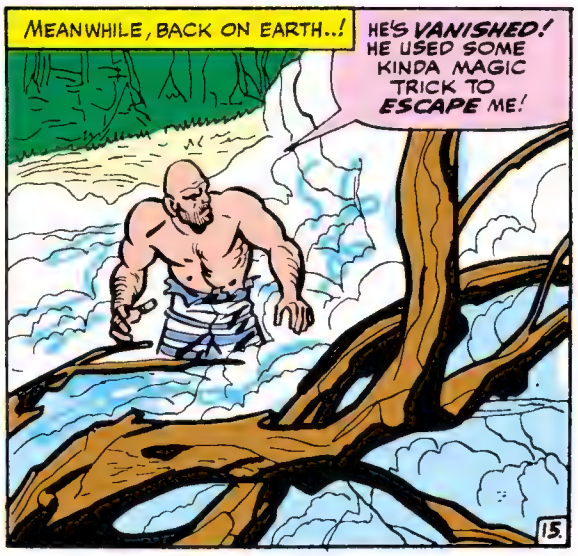

AND, THE ABSORBING MAN'S BOAST PROVES TO BE TRUE, AS THE IMMORTAL AVENGER AND THE EVIL SUPER-MENACE BATTLE FOR HOUR AFTER HOUR, NEITHER ONE TIRING, NEITHER ONE YIELDING, NEITHER ONE NOTICING THE MYSTERIOUS FOG WHICH SLOWLY BEGINS TO ENVELOP THEM...!
IT IS LIKE FIGHTING MYSELF! HE MATCHES ME BLOW FOR BLOW!
OUR STRENGTH IS EQUAL ... BUT MY HATRED IS GREATER! I CAN'T LOSE!

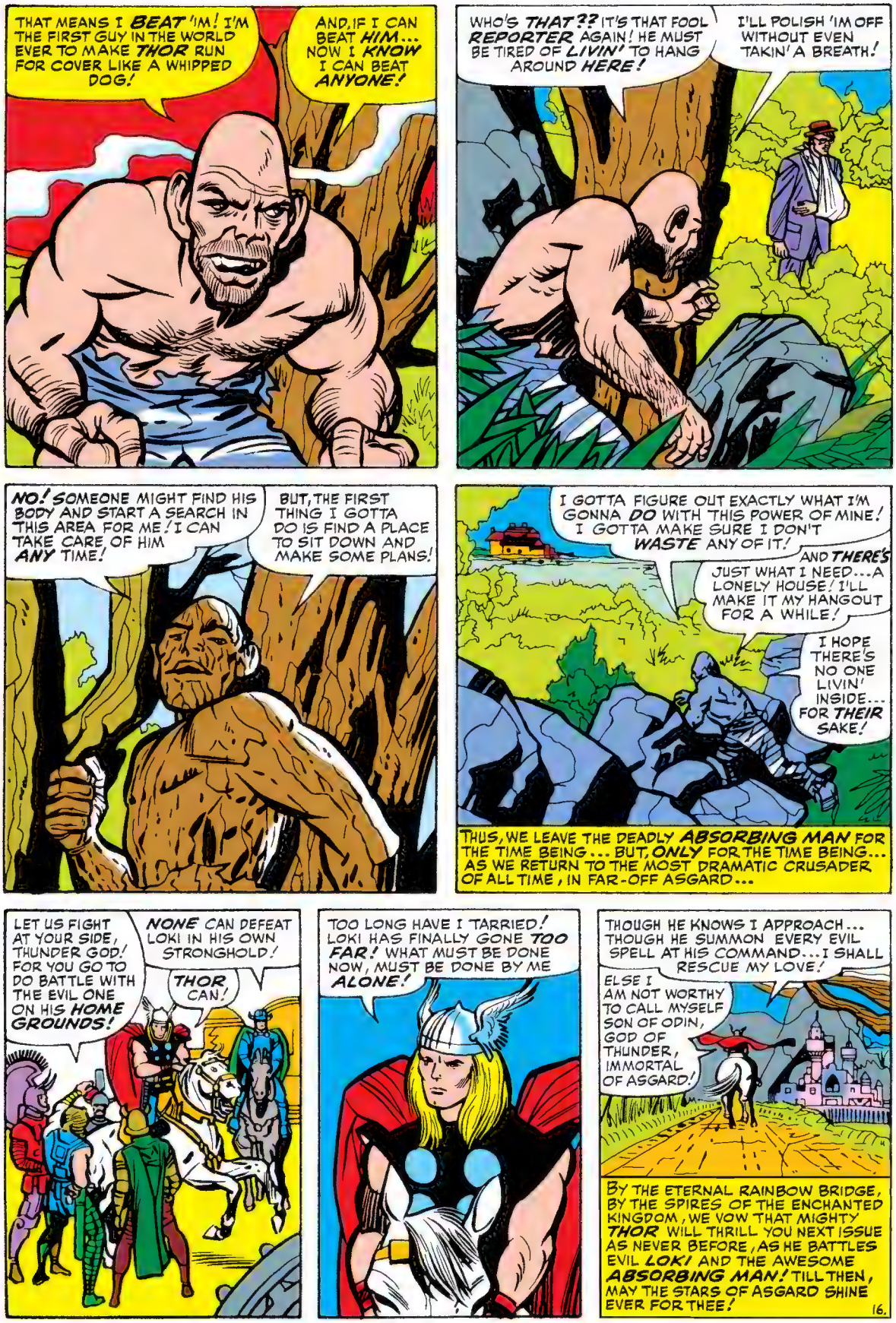

BUT, THIS IS NO ORDINARY FOG WHICH BLANKETS OUR SCENE! IT IS A MYSTIC, INTRADIMENSIONAL MIST, CREATED BY SOME AWESOME SUPER-NATURAL POWER....!
I SEEM TO FEEL THE RAINBOW BRIDGE, MATERIALIZING BENEATH MY FEET!


SECONDS LATER, THE ENCHANTED FOG FADES AWAY, TO REVEAL...
BALDER! YOU DARED INTERFERE WITH THE THUNDER GOD'S EARTHLY BATTLE?!! BY WHAT AUTHORITY DO YOU...??
IN THE NAME OF OUR FRIENDSHIP, MIGHTY THOR! LOKI HAS CAPTURED YOUR MORTAL LOVED ONE...THE FEMALE KNOWN AS JANE!


IN AN INSTANT, ALL THOUGHT OF THE ABSORBING MAN IS FORGOTTEN BY THE SON OF ODIN...
MY BELOVED IN DANGER!! TO HORSE, THEN! LOKI SHALL RUE THIS DAY!


I HAVE BEEN BLIND! IT MUST BE LOKI WHO MADE THE MORTAL SO STRONG...TO KEEP ME FROM THE ONE I LOVE TILL HE COULD STRIKE!
THOUGH ETERNITY BE ENDLESS, BALDERS SELFLESS DEED SHALL LIVE IN MY GRATITUDE FOREVER!


MEANWHILE, BACK ON EARTH..!
HE'S VANISHED! HE USED SOME KINDA MAGIC TRICK TO ESCAPE ME!

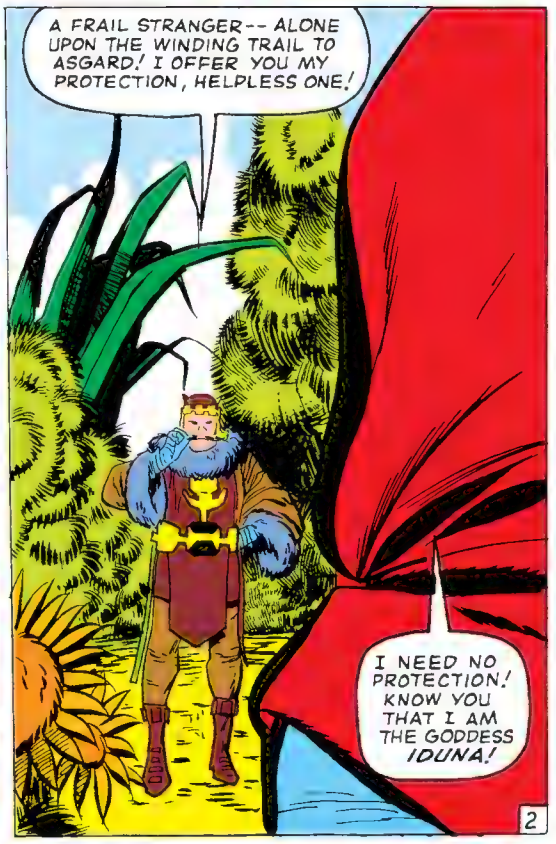

THAT MEANS I BEAT 'IM! I'M THE FIRST GUY IN THE WORLD EVER TO MAKE THOR RUN FOR COVER LIKE A WHIPPED DOG!
AND, IF I CAN BEAT HIM... NOW I KNOW I CAN BEAT ANYONE!
WHO'S THAT?? IT'S THAT FOOL REPORTER AGAIN! HE MUST BE TIRED OF LIVIN' TO HANG AROUND HERE!
I'LL POLISH 'IM OFF WITHOUT EVEN TAKIN' A BREATH!
NO! SOMEONE MIGHT FIND HIS BODY AND START A SEARCH IN THIS AREA FOR ME! I CAN TAKE CARE OF HIM ANY TIME!
BUT, THE FIRST THING I GOTTA DO IS FIND A PLACE TO SIT DOWN AND MAKE SOME PLANS!
I GOTTA FIGURE OUT EXACTLY WHAT I'M GONNA DO WITH THIS POWER OF MINE! I GOTTA MAKE SURE I DON'T WASTE ANY OF IT!
AND THERE'S JUST WHAT I NEED... A LONELY HOUSE! I'LL MAKE IT MY HANGOUT FOR A WHILE!
I HOPE THERE'S NO ONE LIVIN' INSIDE... FOR THEIR SAKE!
THUS, WE LEAVE THE DEADLY ABSORBING MAN FOR THE TIME BEING... BUT, ONLY FOR THE TIME BEING... AS WE RETURN TO THE MOST DRAMATIC CRUSADER OF ALL TIME, IN FAR-OFF ASGARD...
LET US FIGHT AT YOUR SIDE, THUNDER GOD! FOR YOU GO TO DO BATTLE WITH THE EVIL ONE ON HIS HOME GROUNDS!
NONE CAN DEFEAT LOKI IN HIS OWN STRONGHOLD!
THOR CAN!
TOO LONG HAVE I TARRIED! LOKI HAS FINALLY GONE TOO FAR! WHAT MUST BE DONE NOW, MUST BE DONE BY ME ALONE!
THOUGH HE KNOWS I APPROACH... THOUGH HE SUMMON EVERY EVIL SPELL AT HIS COMMAND... I SHALL RESCUE MY LOVE!
ELSE I AM NOT WORTHY TO CALL MYSELF SON OF ODIN, GOD OF THUNDER, IMMORTAL OF ASGARD!
BY THE ETERNAL RAINBOW BRIDGE, BY THE SPIRES OF THE ENCHANTED KINGDOM, WE VOW THAT MIGHTY THOR WILL THRILL YOU NEXT ISSUE AS NEVER BEFORE, AS HE BATTLES EVIL LOKI AND THE AWESOME ABSORBING MAN! TILL THEN, MAY THE STARS OF ASGARD SHINE EVER FOR THEE!
16.

Tales of Asgard, HOME OF THE MIGHTY NORSE GODS!
SPECIAL NOTE: WE INTERRUPT OUR "BIOGRAPHIES-IN-DEPTH SERIES" OF THE LIFE OF LOKI TO PRESENT THIS SPECIAL TALE, BASED ON A NEWLY TRANSLATED VERSION OF ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST ANCIENT LEGENDS! WE THINK YOU WILL RECOGNIZE IT!
"THE GOLDEN APPLES!"
I GIVE THEE GREETINGS, LOVELY GODDESS IDUNA! WHITHER GOEST THOU?
I AM BOUND FOR ASGARD, TO GIVE THE GOLDEN APPLES OF IMMORTALITY TO NOBLE ODIN, SO THAT HE MAY BESTOW THEM UPON THOSE HE DEEMS WORTHY!
THEN GO IN PEACE, IDUNA! AND THE BLESSING OF HAAKUN THE HUNTER BE WITH YOU!
A FABULOUS FEATURETTE BY THE GREATEST NAMES IN COMICDOM...
STAN LEE & JACK KIRBY
INKING: VINCE COLETTA • LETTERING: ARTIE SIMEK
1

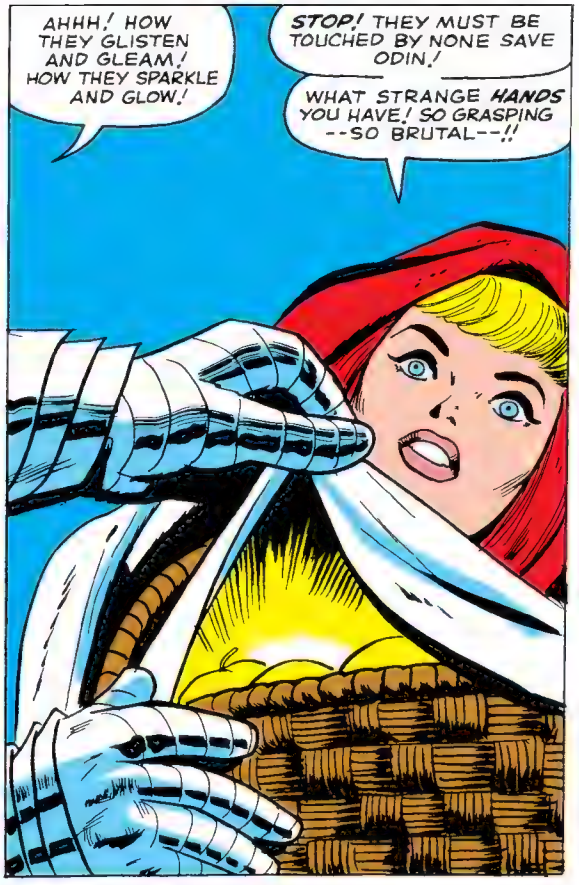
THUS, RESPLENDANT IN HER CRIMSON CLOAK AND HOOD, THE BEAUTEOUS GODDESS CARRIES HER PRECIOUS BASKET OF GOLDEN APPLES DEEPER INTO THE ENCHANTED FOREST...
MANY ARE THE DANGERS WHICH LURK IN YON FOREST,' BUT, NONE WOULD DARE MENACE THE PERSON OF A GODDESS!

BUT, ALAS, IDUNA'S CONFIDENCE IS GREATER THAN HER WISDOM.' FOR, THERE IS ONE WITHIN THE DEEP WOODS WHO FEARS NOTHING THAT LIVES -- BEHOLD THE EVIL FENRIS,' FENRIS, THE WOLF GOD!
IDUNA APPROACHES.' WITH HER PRICELESS GOLDEN APPLES,!! THOSE APPLES MUST BE MINE.!!

THOUGH IT IS DISTASTEFUL TO ME, I SHALL ASSUME HUMAN FORM IN ORDER TO MAKE THOSE GOLDEN TREASURES MINE.' IDUNA WILL SUSPECT NOTHING!

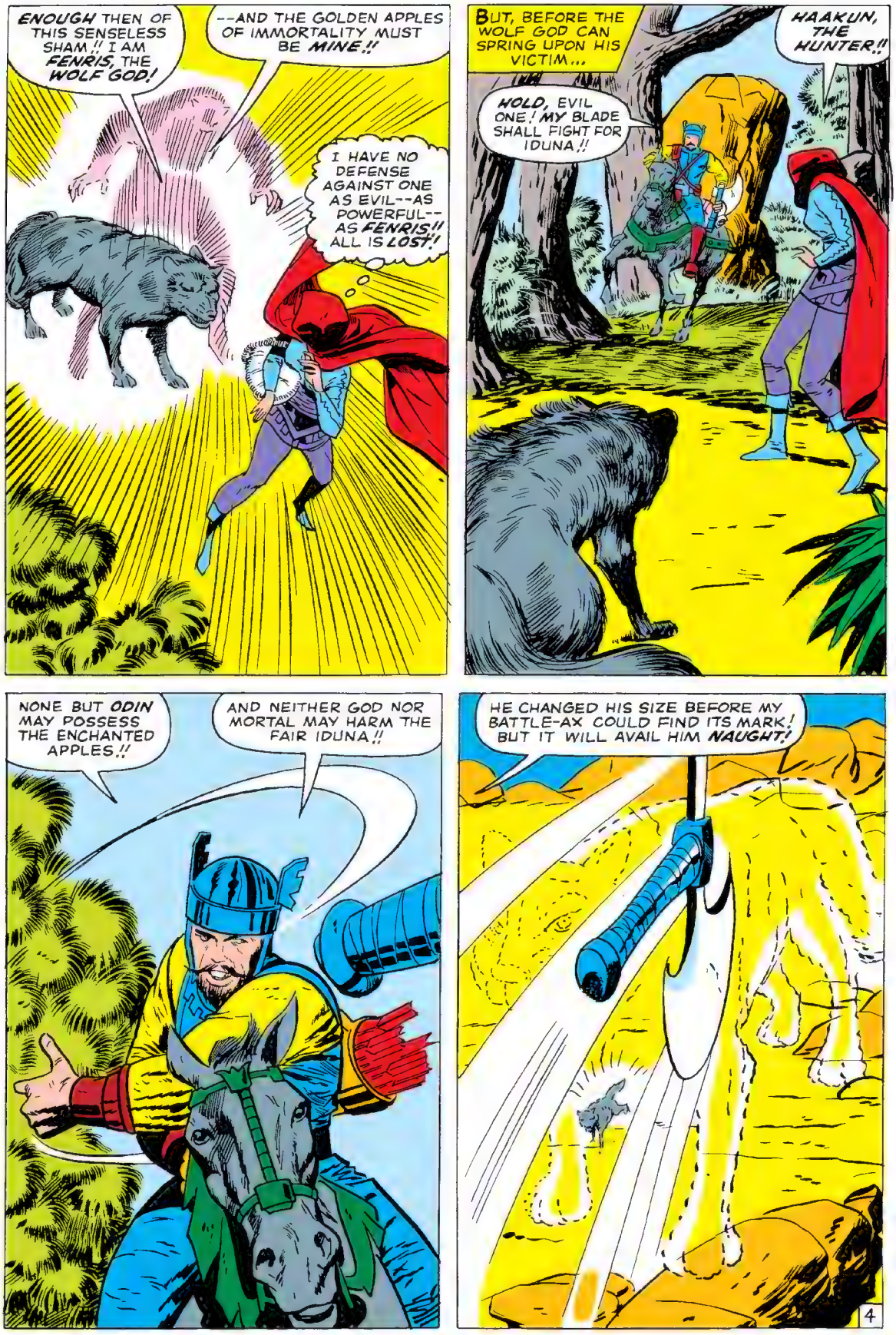

A FRAIL STRANGER -- ALONE UPON THE WINDING TRAIL TO ASGARD.' I OFFER YOU MY PROTECTION, HELPLESS ONE.'
I NEED NO PROTECTION.' KNOW YOU THAT I AM THE GODDESS IDUNA!

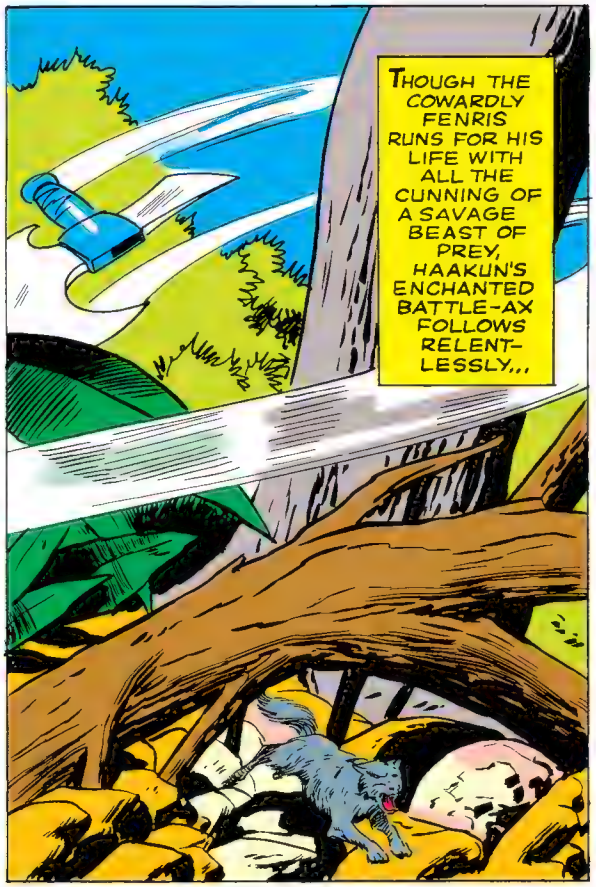
AND WHAT DO YOU CARRY IN THAT LITTLE BASKET, MY FAIR IDUNA?
THE GOLDEN APPLES OF IMMORTALITY, WHICH I BRING EACH YEAR TO THE LORDLY ODIN!

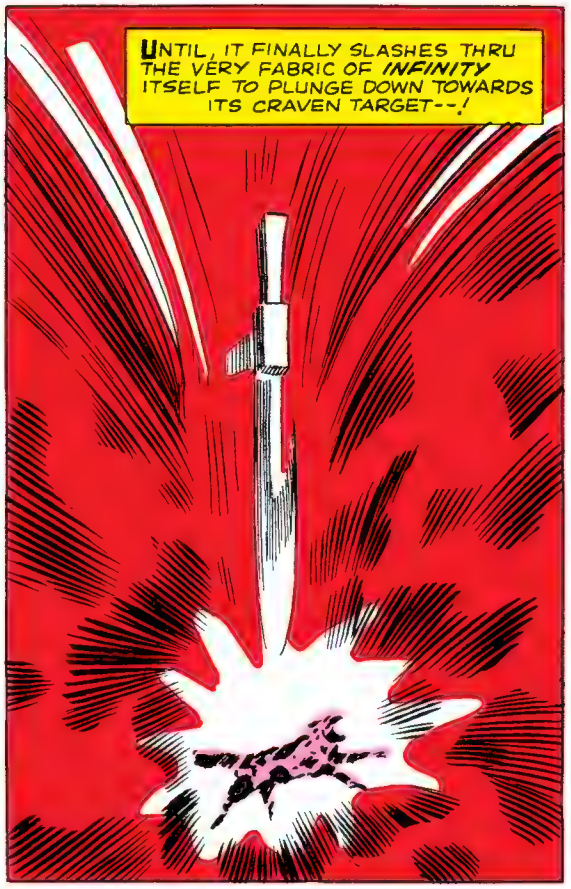

AHHH! HOW THEY GLISTEN AND GLEAM! HOW THEY SPARKLE AND GLOW!
STOP! THEY MUST BE TOUCHED BY NONE SAVE ODIN!
WHAT STRANGE HANDS YOU HAVE! SO GRASPING --SO BRUTAL--!!

AND, WHAT AN ODD VOICE YOU HAVE!! LIKE THE GUTTERAL SNARL OF A WILD BEAST!! WHO ARE YOU?? FROM WHENCE DO YOU COME?
I AM BUT A LONELY TRAVELER, ALSO BOUND FOR ASGARD!

BUT YOUR MANNER IS SINISTER-- FRIGHTENING! AND YOUR EYES--THEY BURN WITH HATRED-- WITH PURE SAVAGERY!
YOU SAY TOO MUCH, IDUNA! YOUR WORDS NOW FORCE MY HAND--!


ENOUGH THEN OF THIS SENSELESS SHAM!! I AM FENRIS, THE WOLF GOD!
--AND THE GOLDEN APPLES OF IMMORTALITY MUST BE MINE!!
I HAVE NO DEFENSE AGAINST ONE AS EVIL--AS POWERFUL--AS FENRIS!! ALL IS LOST!
BUT, BEFORE THE WOLF GOD CAN SPRING UPON HIS VICTIM...
HAAKUN, THE HUNTER!!
HOLD, EVIL ONE! MY BLADE SHALL FIGHT FOR IDUNA!!
NONE BUT ODIN MAY POSSESS THE ENCHANTED APPLES!!
AND NEITHER GOD NOR MORTAL MAY HARM THE FAIR IDUNA!!
HE CHANGED HIS SIZE BEFORE MY BATTLE-AX COULD FIND ITS MARK! BUT IT WILL AVAIL HIM NAUGHT!
4

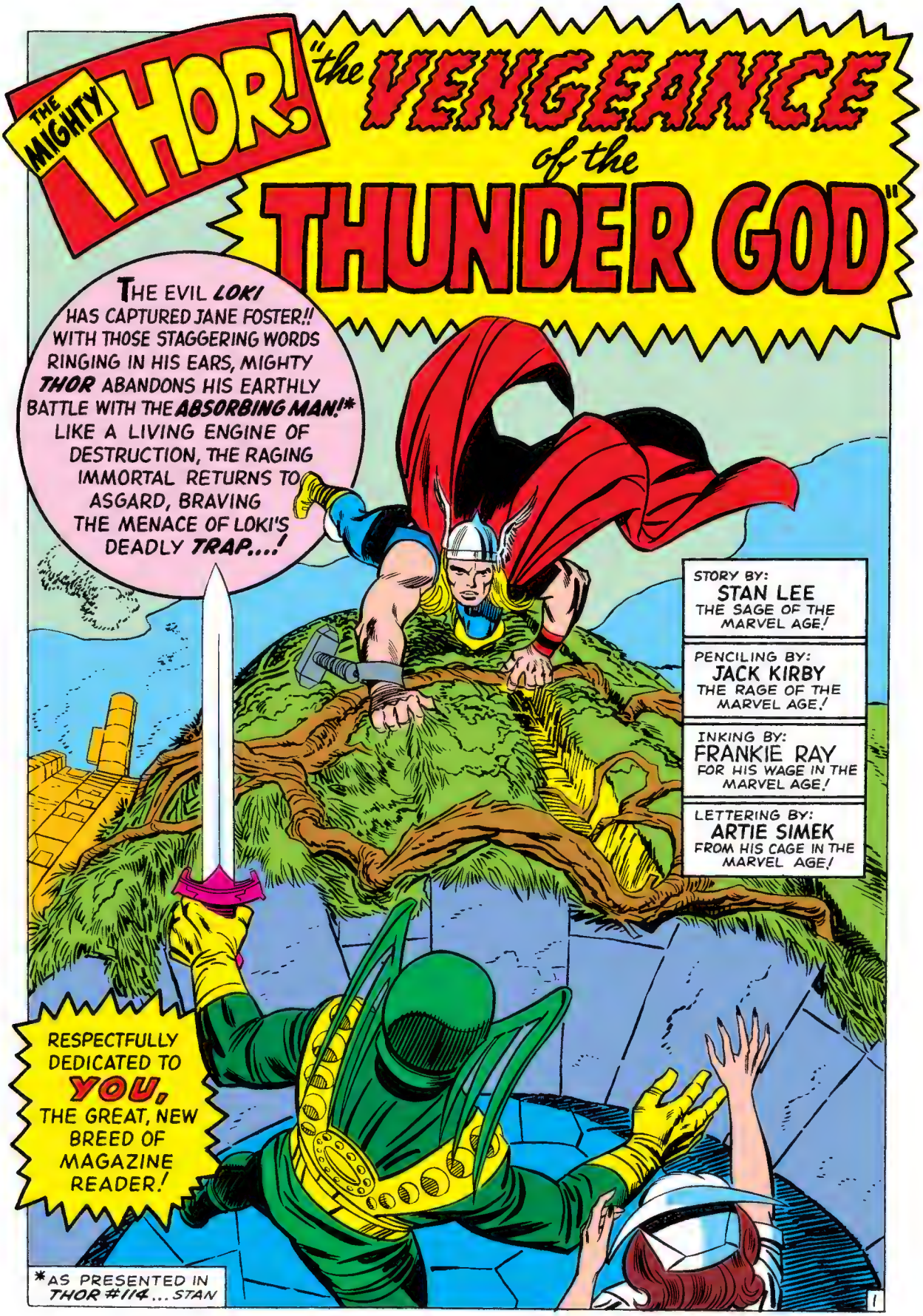

THOUGH THE COWARDLY FENRIS RUNS FOR HIS LIFE WITH ALL THE CUNNING OF A SAVAGE BEAST OF PREY, HAAKUN'S ENCHANTED BATTLE-AX FOLLOWS RELENTLESSLY...

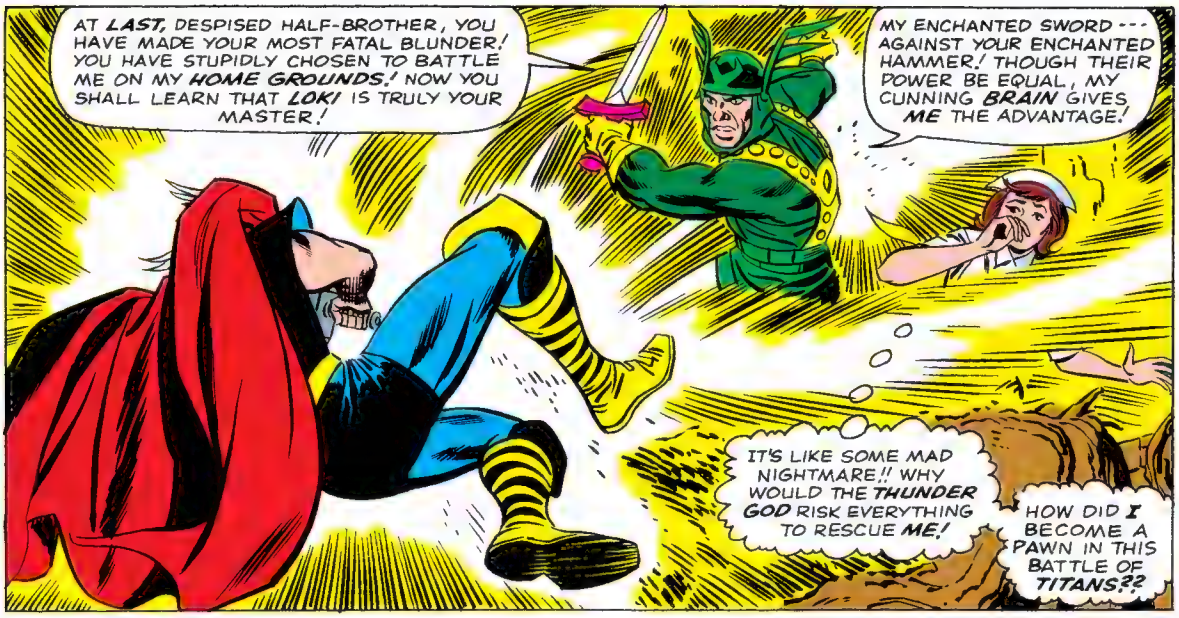


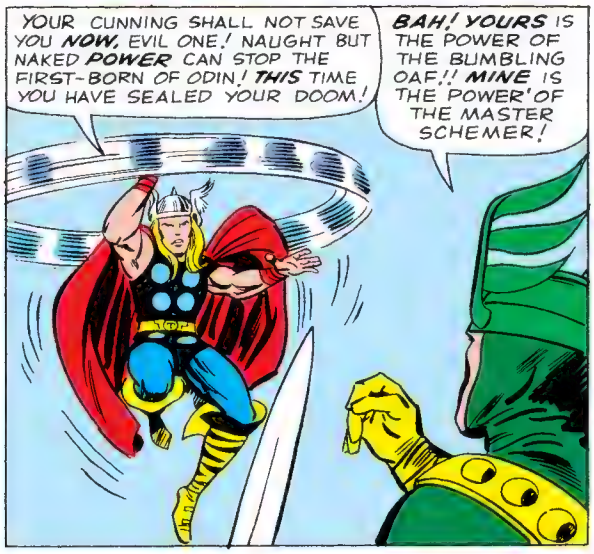
THUS, THE MENACE OF FENRIS IS ENDED, AS THE EVIL WOLF GOD IS HURLED INTO FAR *VARINHEIM*, THE SEETHING, SHADOWY LAND OF THE LOST, WHICH LIES NEAR THE NETHERWORLD AT THE FARTHEST REACHES OF THE ENDLESS COSMOS!
5

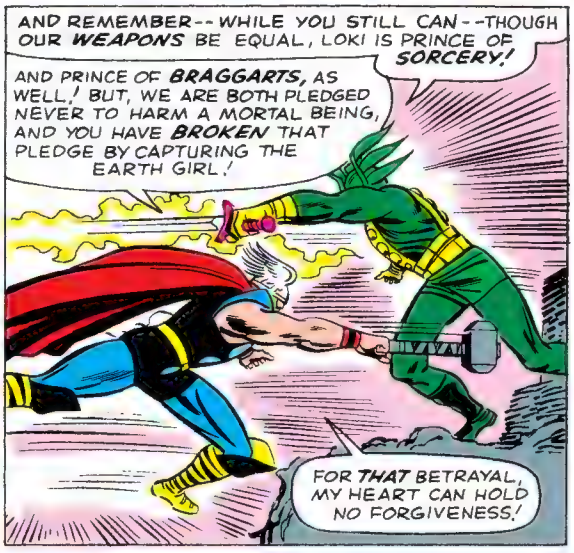
LO, OUR TALE IS DONE! A TALE WHICH HAS BEEN HANDED DOWN THRU THE AGES--FROM FAR-OFF ASGARD TO THE FERTILE, GREEN HILLS OF EARTH! A TALE WHICH HAS BEEN CHANGED COUNTLESS TIMES IN THE RE-TELLING, UNTIL THE MORTALS OF TODAY LULL THEIR CHILDREN TO SLEEP WITH IT--CALLING IT THE FAIRY TALE OF *LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD!* THUS, THOUGH THE NAMES AND THE DETAILS MAY CHANGE, THE LEGENDS THEMSELVES CAN NEVER DIE!

JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY
WITH
THE MIGHTY
THOR
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
IND.
MARVEL COMICS GROUP 12¢
A NEW EXPERIENCE IN GREATNESS!
115
APR
"THE VENGEANCE OF THE THUNDER GOD!"
THE M.M.M.S. WANTS YOU!

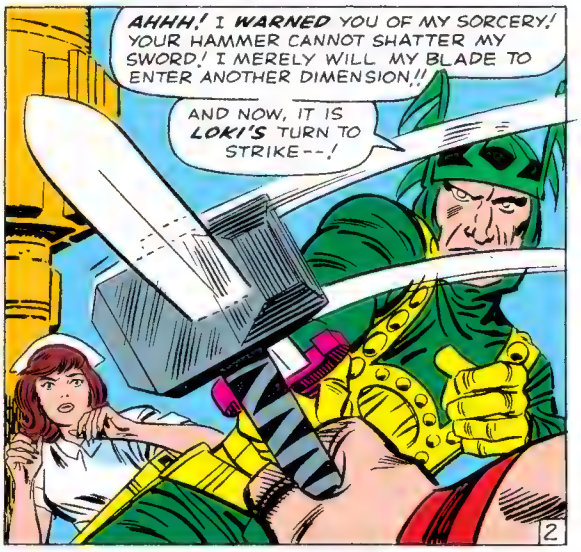

THE MIGHTY THOR!
"the VENGEANCE of the THUNDER GOD"
THE EVIL LOKI HAS CAPTURED JANE FOSTER!! WITH THOSE STAGGERING WORDS RINGING IN HIS EARS, MIGHTY THOR ABANDONS HIS EARTHLY BATTLE WITH THE ABSORBING MAN!* LIKE A LIVING ENGINE OF DESTRUCTION, THE RAGING IMMORTAL RETURNS TO ASGARD, BRAVING THE MENACE OF LOKI'S DEADLY TRAP...!
STORY BY: STAN LEE THE SAGE OF THE MARVEL AGE!
PENCILING BY: JACK KIRBY THE RAGE OF THE MARVEL AGE!
INKING BY: FRANKIE RAY FOR HIS WAGE IN THE MARVEL AGE!
LETTERING BY: ARTIE SIMEK FROM HIS CAGE IN THE MARVEL AGE!
RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED TO YOU, THE GREAT, NEW BREED OF MAGAZINE READER!
*AS PRESENTED IN THOR #114... STAN
1


AT LAST, DESPISED HALF-BROTHER, YOU HAVE MADE YOUR MOST FATAL BLUNDER! YOU HAVE STUPIDLY CHOSEN TO BATTLE ME ON MY HOME GROUNDS! NOW YOU SHALL LEARN THAT LOKI IS TRULY YOUR MASTER!
MY ENCHANTED SWORD --- AGAINST YOUR ENCHANTED HAMMER! THOUGH THEIR POWER BE EQUAL, MY CUNNING BRAIN GIVES ME THE ADVANTAGE!
IT'S LIKE SOME MAD NIGHTMARE!! WHY WOULD THE THUNDER GOD RISK EVERYTHING TO RESCUE ME!
HOW DID I BECOME A PAWN IN THIS BATTLE OF TITANS??

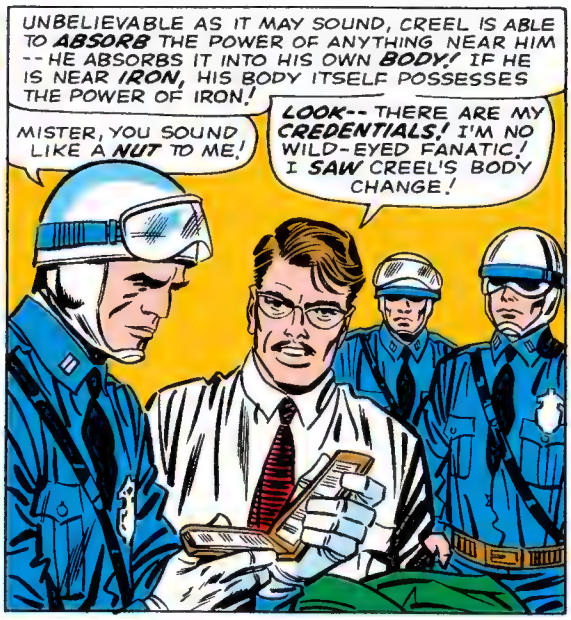

YOUR CUNNING SHALL NOT SAVE YOU NOW, EVIL ONE! NAUGHT BUT NAKED POWER CAN STOP THE FIRST-BORN OF ODIN! THIS TIME YOU HAVE SEALED YOUR DOOM!
BAH! YOURS IS THE POWER OF THE BUMBLING OAF!! MINE IS THE POWER OF THE MASTER SCHEMER!

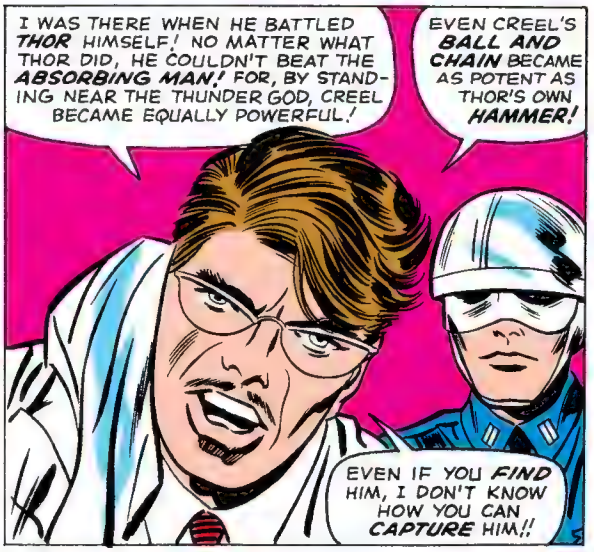

AND REMEMBER--WHILE YOU STILL CAN--THOUGH OUR WEAPONS BE EQUAL, LOKI IS PRINCE OF SORCERY!
AND PRINCE OF BRAGGARTS, AS WELL! BUT, WE ARE BOTH PLEDGED NEVER TO HARM A MORTAL BEING, AND YOU HAVE BROKEN THAT PLEDGE BY CAPTURING THE EARTH GIRL!
FOR THAT BETRAYAL, MY HEART CAN HOLD NO FORGIVENESS!

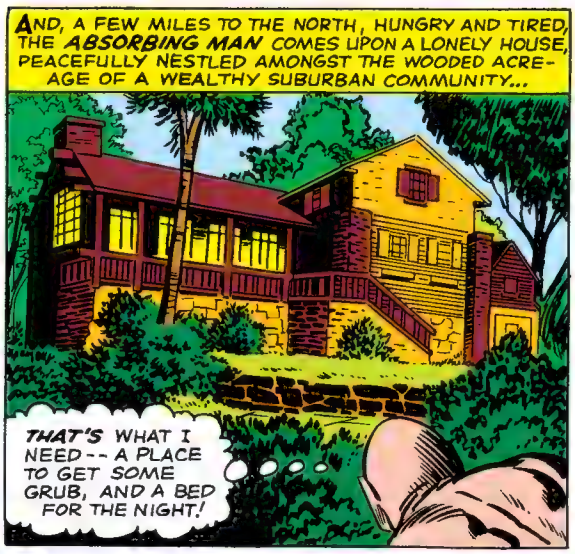
FOOL! I HAVE NOT HARMED HER! SHE WAS MERELY BAIT, TO LURE YOU TO ME!
BUT, NEVER AGAIN SHALL YOU USE SUCH BAIT! NEVER AGAIN SHALL AN UNWITTING HUMAN SERVE YOUR EVIL PURPOSE!

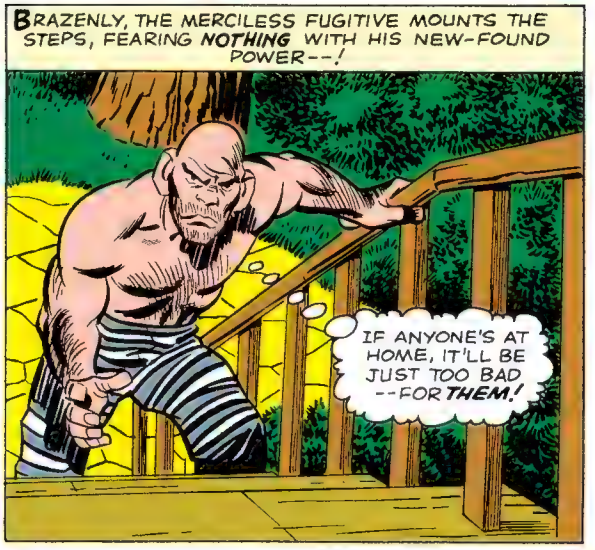

AHHH! I WARNED YOU OF MY SORCERY! YOUR HAMMER CANNOT SHATTER MY SWORD! I MERELY WILL MY BLADE TO ENTER ANOTHER DIMENSION!!
AND NOW, IT IS LOKI'S TURN TO STRIKE--!

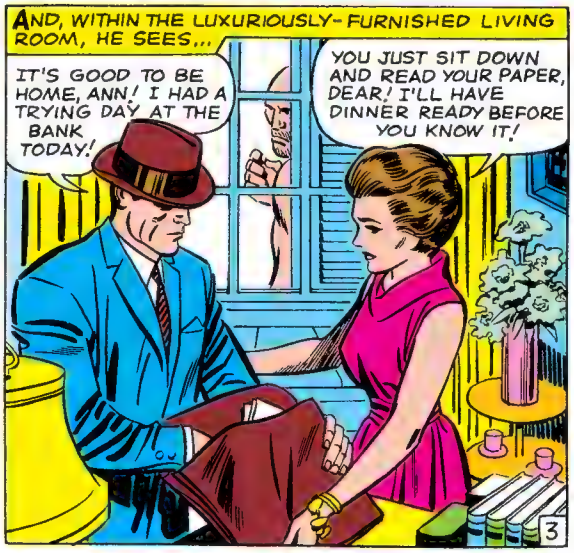
BUT, WHILE THE AWESOME BATTLE RAGES IN FAR-OFF ASGARD, EVENTS ARE TRANSPIRING ON EARTH WHICH ALSO MERIT OUR SERIOUS ATTENTION...
YOU'RE HARRIS HOBBS, THE REPORTER FOR AFFILIATED PRESS! WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUT HERE, HOBBS?
SAME THING YOU ARE! I'M LOOKING FOR THE ESCAPED CONVICT, CRUSHER CREEL!
WHAT'S ALL THIS ABOUT PEOPLE CALLING HIM THE ABSORBING MAN? WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

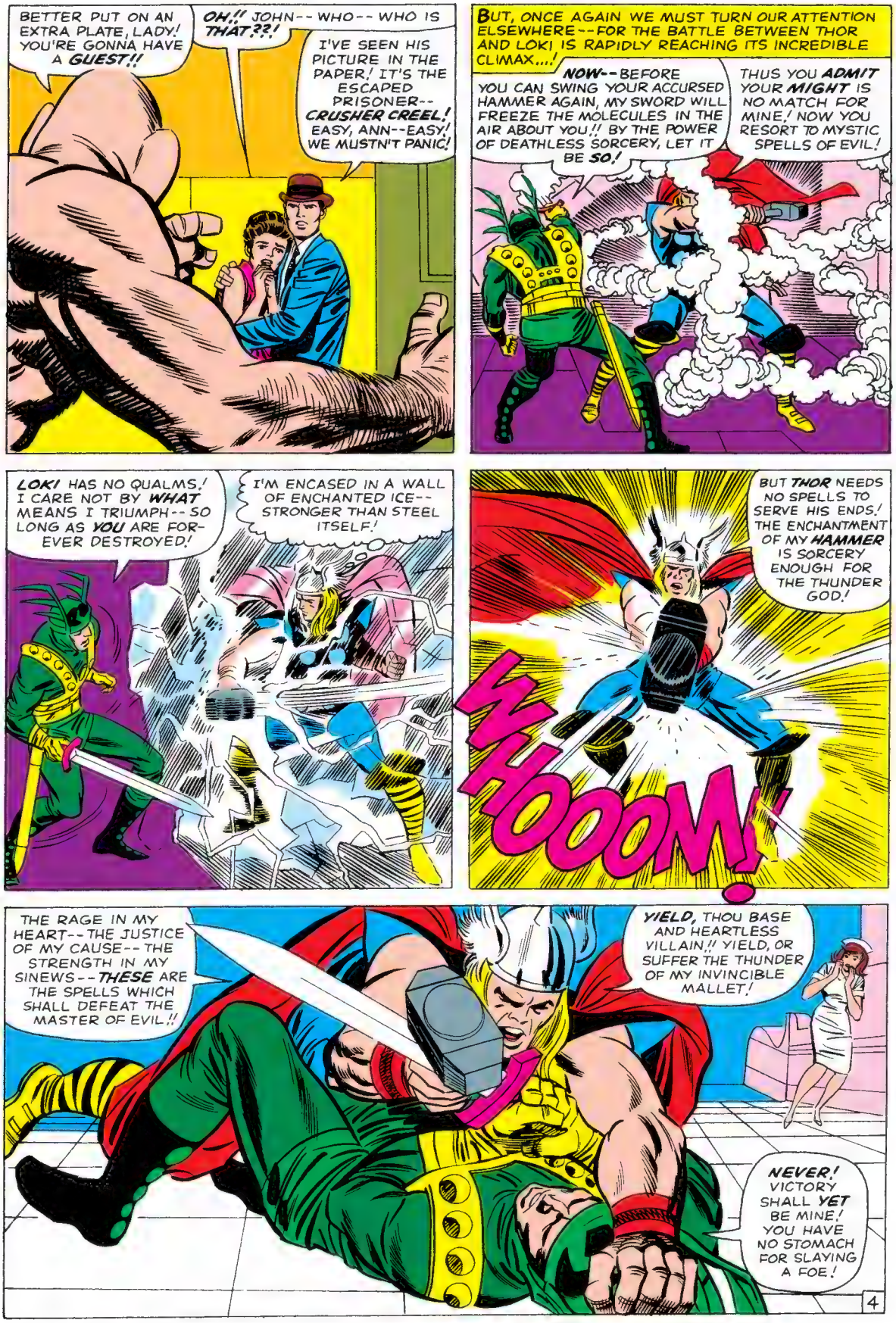

UNBELIEVABLE AS IT MAY SOUND, CREEL IS ABLE TO ABSORB THE POWER OF ANYTHING NEAR HIM -- HE ABSORBS IT INTO HIS OWN BODY! IF HE IS NEAR IRON, HIS BODY ITSELF POSSESSES THE POWER OF IRON!
MISTER, YOU SOUND LIKE A NUT TO ME!
LOOK-- THERE ARE MY CREDENTIALS! I'M NO WILD-EYED FANATIC! I SAW CREEL'S BODY CHANGE!


I WAS THERE WHEN HE BATTLED THOR HIMSELF! NO MATTER WHAT THOR DID, HE COULDN'T BEAT THE ABSORBING MAN! FOR, BY STANDING NEAR THE THUNDER GOD, CREEL BECAME EQUALLY POWERFUL!
EVEN CREEL'S BALL AND CHAIN BECAME AS POTENT AS THOR'S OWN HAMMER!
EVEN IF YOU FIND HIM, I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU CAN CAPTURE HIM!!

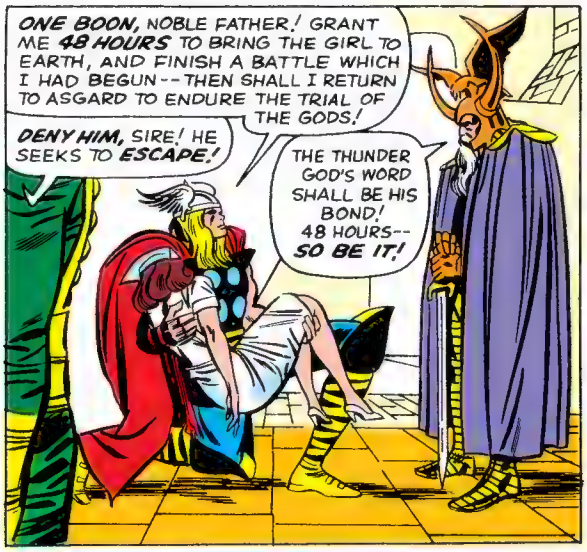

AND, A FEW MILES TO THE NORTH, HUNGRY AND TIRED, THE ABSORBING MAN COMES UPON A LONELY HOUSE, PEACEFULLY NESTLED AMONGST THE WOODED ACREAGE OF A WEALTHY SUBURBAN COMMUNITY...
THAT'S WHAT I NEED -- A PLACE TO GET SOME GRUB, AND A BED FOR THE NIGHT!

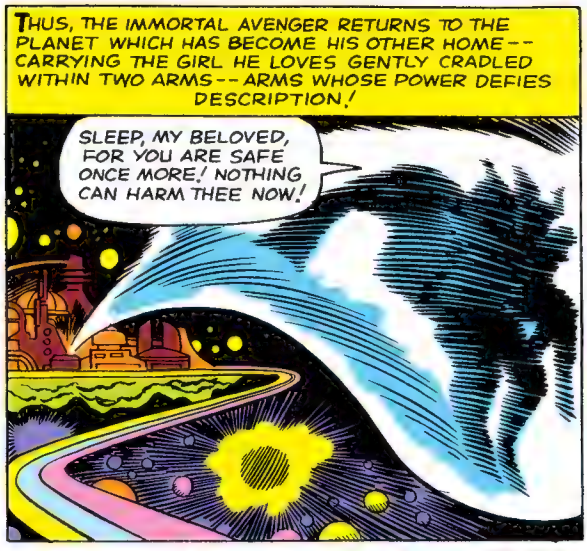

BRAZENLY, THE MERCILESS FUGITIVE MOUNTS THE STEPS, FEARING NOTHING WITH HIS NEW-FOUND POWER--!
IF ANYONE'S AT HOME, IT'LL BE JUST TOO BAD --FOR THEM!

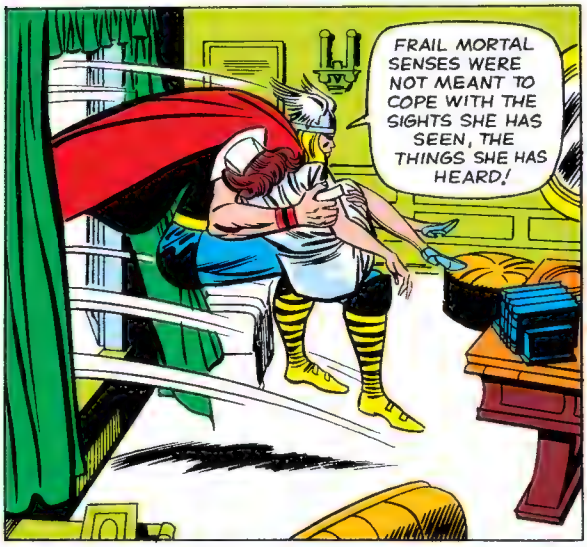

AND, WITHIN THE LUXURIOUSLY-FURNISHED LIVING ROOM, HE SEES...
IT'S GOOD TO BE HOME, ANN! I HAD A TRYING DAY AT THE BANK TODAY!
YOU JUST SIT DOWN AND READ YOUR PAPER, DEAR! I'LL HAVE DINNER READY BEFORE YOU KNOW IT!
3

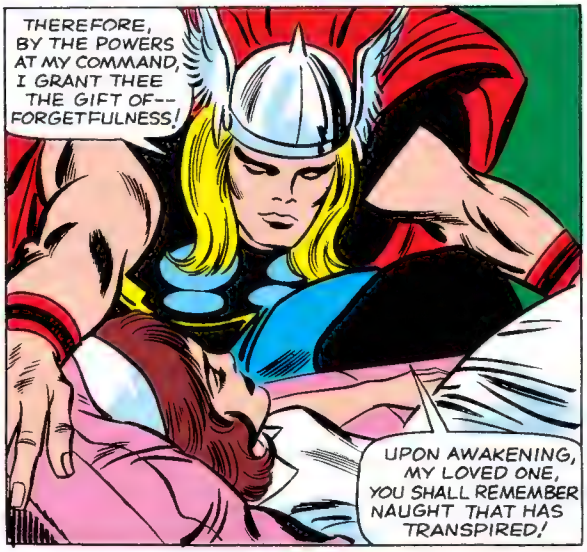

BETTER PUT ON AN EXTRA PLATE, LADY! YOU'RE GONNA HAVE A GUEST!!
OH!! JOHN-- WHO-- WHO IS THAT??!
I'VE SEEN HIS PICTURE IN THE PAPER! IT'S THE ESCAPED PRISONER-- CRUSHER CREEL! EASY, ANN--EASY! WE MUSTN'T PANIC!
BUT, ONCE AGAIN WE MUST TURN OUR ATTENTION ELSEWHERE--FOR THE BATTLE BETWEEN THOR AND LOKI IS RAPIDLY REACHING ITS INCREDIBLE CLIMAX...!
NOW--BEFORE YOU CAN SWING YOUR ACCURSED HAMMER AGAIN, MY SWORD WILL FREEZE THE MOLECULES IN THE AIR ABOUT YOU!! BY THE POWER OF DEATHLESS SORCERY, LET IT BE SO!
THUS YOU ADMIT YOUR MIGHT IS NO MATCH FOR MINE! NOW YOU RESORT TO MYSTIC SPELLS OF EVIL!
LOKI HAS NO QUALMS! I CARE NOT BY WHAT MEANS I TRIUMPH--SO LONG AS YOU ARE FOREVER DESTROYED!
I'M ENCASED IN A WALL OF ENCHANTED ICE-- STRONGER THAN STEEL ITSELF!
BUT THOR NEEDS NO SPELLS TO SERVE HIS ENDS! THE ENCHANTMENT OF MY HAMMER IS SORCERY ENOUGH FOR THE THUNDER GOD!
WHOOOM!
THE RAGE IN MY HEART--THE JUSTICE OF MY CAUSE--THE STRENGTH IN MY SINEWS--THESE ARE THE SPELLS WHICH SHALL DEFEAT THE MASTER OF EVIL!!
YIELD, THOU BASE AND HEARTLESS VILLAIN!! YIELD, OR SUFFER THE THUNDER OF MY INVINCIBLE MALLET!
NEVER! VICTORY SHALL YET BE MINE! YOU HAVE NO STOMACH FOR SLAYING A FOE!

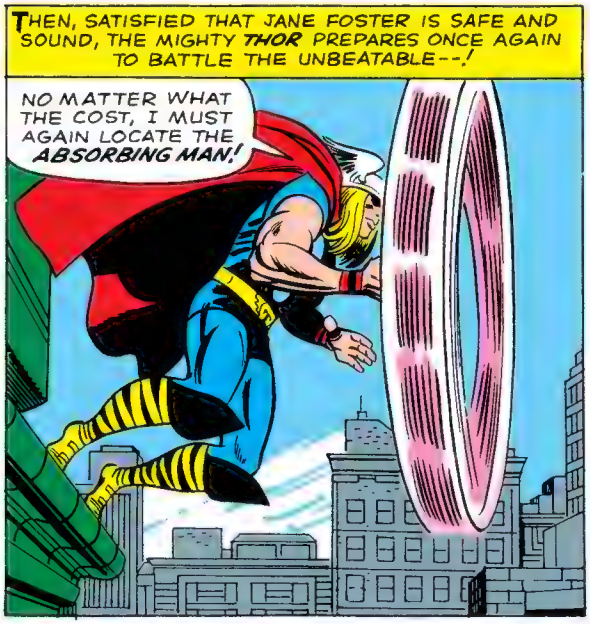
BUT, AT THAT VERY INSTANT, A DEAFENING EXPLOSION INTERRUPTS THOR'S MOMENT OF FINAL DECISION...!
WHAT NEW MANNER OF SORCERY HAS LOKI EMPLOYED TO DELAY MY RETRIBUTION??
THIS IS NOT MY DOING? WHAT OTHER POWER WOULD DARE INTERRUPT A BATTLE OF GODS??
AND THEN, A SILENT FIGURE APPEARS! STATELY, MOTIONLESS, REGAL -- THE FIGURE OF HIM WHO SPEAKS WHILST GALAXIES OBEY!
NOBLE ODIN-- LORD OF ASGARD!!
YOU SUMMONED HIM, THOR -- TO SAVE YOU FROM DEFEAT!
YOUR WORDS ARE AS FALSE AS YOUR EVIL HEART, HALF-BROTHER!
SO! AGAIN I FIND MY TWO SONS -- ROYAL PRINCELINGS OF ASGARD, ENGAGED IN PRIVATE CONFLICT WHICH HATH NOT THE APPROVAL OF ODIN!
I WISHED TO SPARE YOU, NOBLE LIEGE! KNOWING HOW YOU LOVE THE UNWORTHLY THOR, I COULD NOT BRING MYSELF TO TELL YOU OF HIS TREACHERY!
THE THUNDER GOD HAS COMMITTED THE ULTIMATE BLASPHEMY!! HE HAS BROUGHT THE FORBIDDEN EARTHLING TO ASGARD -- HOPING TO MAKE HER AN IMMORTAL!
I TRIED TO STOP HIM, MY LORD! I WOULD HAVE GIVEN MY LIFE TO SPARE YOU THIS INDIGNITY!
YOU LIE, PRINCE OF SCOUNDRELS --!
JANE!! THE ORDEAL HAS BEEN TOO MUCH! SHE HAS COLLAPSED!
BEHOLD, ALL-WISEST! STILL HE DEFIES THEE! STILL HE FLAUNTS HIS LOVE!
SILENCE! I KNOW TOO WELL THE CUNNING OF THY TONGUE, RUTHLESS LOKI! ODIN SHALL NOT BE DECEIVED!
AND YET, I MUST BELIEVE THE EVIDENCE OF MINE EYES! IT SEEMS THE GOD OF THUNDER HAS FINALLY GONE TOO FAR!
THUS, NAUGHT REMAINS BUT FOR ME TO ORDER -- THE TRIAL OF THE GODS!


ONE BOON, NOBLE FATHER! GRANT ME 48 HOURS TO BRING THE GIRL TO EARTH, AND FINISH A BATTLE WHICH I HAD BEGUN--THEN SHALL I RETURN TO ASGARD TO ENDURE THE TRIAL OF THE GODS!
DENY HIM, SIRE! HE SEEKS TO ESCAPE!
THE THUNDER GOD'S WORD SHALL BE HIS BOND! 48 HOURS-- SO BE IT!


THUS, THE IMMORTAL AVENGER RETURNS TO THE PLANET WHICH HAS BECOME HIS OTHER HOME-- CARRYING THE GIRL HE LOVES GENTLY CRADLED WITHIN TWO ARMS--ARMS WHOSE POWER DEFIES DESCRIPTION!
SLEEP, MY BELOVED, FOR YOU ARE SAFE ONCE MORE! NOTHING CAN HARM THEE NOW!


FRAIL MORTAL SENSES WERE NOT MEANT TO COPE WITH THE SIGHTS SHE HAS SEEN, THE THINGS SHE HAS HEARD!


THEREFORE, BY THE POWERS AT MY COMMAND, I GRANT THEE THE GIFT OF-- FORGETFULNESS!
UPON AWAKENING, MY LOVED ONE, YOU SHALL REMEMBER NAUGHT THAT HAS TRANSPIRED!

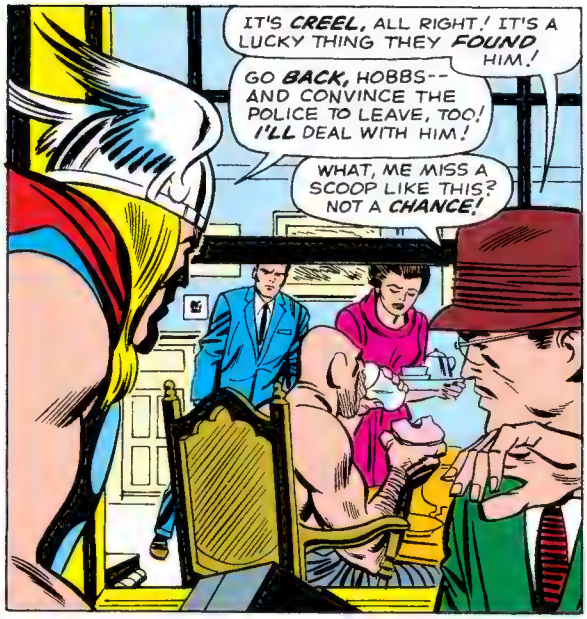

THEN, SATISFIED THAT JANE FOSTER IS SAFE AND SOUND, THE MIGHTY THOR PREPARES ONCE AGAIN TO BATTLE THE UNBEATABLE--!
NO MATTER WHAT THE COST, I MUST AGAIN LOCATE THE ABSORBING MAN!

FOR I HAVE PLEDGED MY VERY LIFE TO THE DEFENSE OF EARTH!
AND, SO LONG AS THAT DEADLY MENACE EXISTS UNCHECKED, ALL MANKIND IS IN THE GRAVEST DANGER!

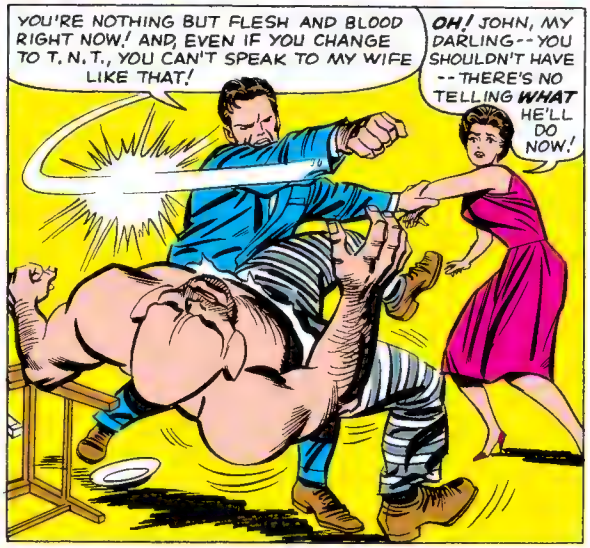
AND, IN ANOTHER SECTION OF THE STATE...
IF YOU THINK YOU CAN BREAK INTO MY HOUSE AND GET AWAY WITH IT, YOU'VE ANOTHER THINK COMING!
NOW, I'LL GIVE YOU FIVE MINUTES TO GET GOING BEFORE I CALL THE POLICE!
IZZAT SO?
MISTER, IT'S TIME I BEGIN YOUR EDUCATION! YOU GOT A LOT TO LEARN ABOUT CRUSHER CREEL!
MAYBE YOU AINT HEARD ABOUT IT YET, BUT I'M THE GUY WHO JUST FOUGHT THOR TO A STAND-STILL AND MADE 'IM GO RUNNIN' OFF WITH HIS TAIL BETWEEN HIS LEGS!
THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! YOU MUST BE MAD!
TAKE YOUR HANDS OFF MY HUSBAND, YOU HORRIBLE BRUTE!
NO, ANN-- DON'T!! KEEP OUT OF THIS!!
THAT'S OKAY, MISTER! SHE CAN'T BOTHER THE ABSORBING MAN!
WHA-- ?!!
NOW DO YA SEE WHY NOTHIN' CAN STOP ME?? I ABSORB THE POWER OF ANYTHING I'M ATTACKED WITH! GLASS, WOOD, STEEL--- EVEN THOR'S HAMMER!
I-I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! IT MUST BE SOME KIND OF--OF TRICK!
BUT-- LOOK AT HIM!! HE-HE'S MADE OF GLASS!
NOT ANY MORE I AINT! I CAN BECOME RAW SILK, JUST BY TOUCHIN' THIS CURTAIN!
JOHN! THIS IS MADNESS! WHAT WILL WE DO? WHERE WILL IT END?
EASY, DEAR! WE'VE GOT TO SEE IT THRU, SOME HOW!

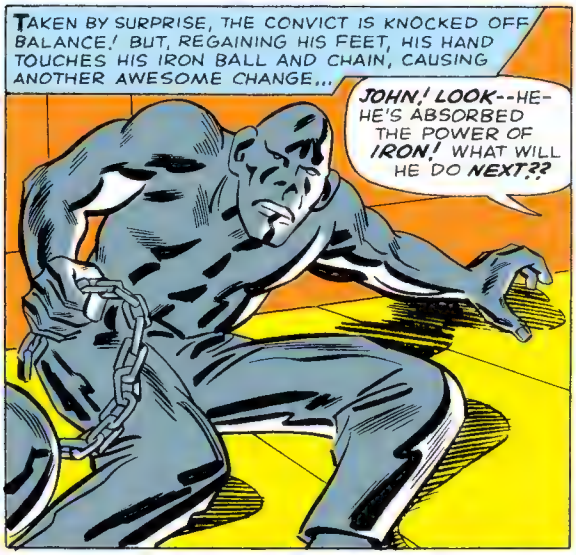
BUT NO GUY WANTS TO BE MADE OUTTA SILK!
'SPECIALLY WHEN HE CAN TOUCH A STATUE, LIKE THIS -- AND GET HIMSELF THE STRENGTH OF A BODY OF BRONZE!!
STILL THINK I'M JUST SOME KINDA NUT?
AND NOW THAT YOUR EDUCATION'S OVER, I WANTCHA TO HOP WHEN I GIVE AN ORDER, SEE?? THE FIRST THING I WANT NOW IS SOME GRUB,' SO, FIX ME A DINNER -- AND BE QUICK ABOUT IT!
DO AS HE SAYS, DEAR.' SOONER OR LATER, HELP IS SURE TO REACH US.
I WOULDN'T COUNT ON IT IF I WAS YOU!
AND, DRAWING EVER CLOSER, WE FIND...
WE'RE CLOSING IN, CHIEF.' HIS TRAIL IS GETTING CLEARER!
STOP! I MUST TALK TO YOU, HOBBS.'
IT'S THOR.'
FAN OUT, BOYS.' WE'RE GONNA COMB EVERY INCH OF THIS AREA.'
WE'VE GOT BAZOOKAS AND FLAME THROWERS.' BUT, IF HE CAN ABSORB THEIR POWER -- !!!
IF WE FIND HIM, FOLLOW PLAN G.'
YOU CAN'T STOP THEM NOW, THOR.' THEY'VE ALMOST FOUND HIM.'
BUT, HE IS MORE DANGEROUS THAN YOU SUSPECT.' YOU MUST LET ME BATTLE HIM FIRST.'
THANKS, AVENGER -- BUT WE DON'T NEED ANYBODY TO DO OUR JOB FOR US.' YOU CAN JOIN US, IF YOU WANT TO.'
I ADMIRE THEIR COURAGE -- BUT I FEAR FOR THEIR SAFETY.' I MUST FIND SOME WAY TO REACH THE ABSORBING MAN FIRST.'
THERE'S A HOUSE IN THAT CLEARING.' THEY'RE GOING TO CHECK IT OUT.' THIS COULD BE IT.'

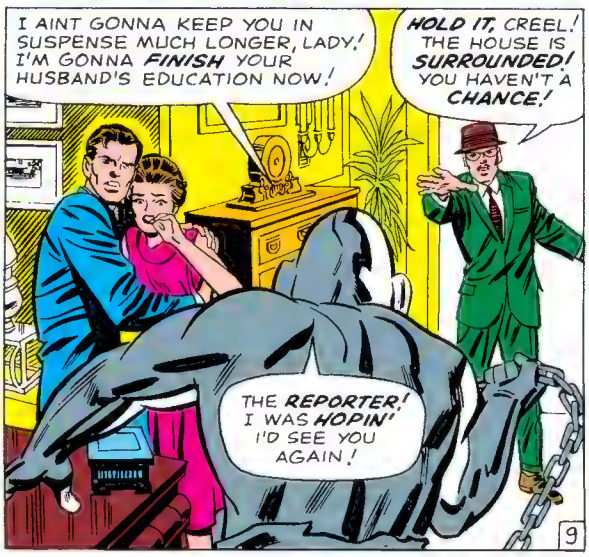
THIS IS THE PLACE! HIS TRACKS LEAD TO THE BACK DOOR!
SERGEANT, DEPLOY YOUR MEN AROUND THE HOUSE! MOVE!


IT'S CREEL, ALL RIGHT! IT'S A LUCKY THING THEY FOUND HIM!
GO BACK, HOBBS--AND CONVINCE THE POLICE TO LEAVE, TOO! I'LL DEAL WITH HIM!
WHAT, ME MISS A SCOOP LIKE THIS? NOT A CHANCE!

MEANWHILE, SO CONFIDENT IS THE ABSORBING MAN OF HIS OWN POWER, THAT HE DOESN'T EVEN BOTHER TO INVESTIGATE THE MUFFLED FOOTSTEPS HE HEARS OUTSIDE!
I'M STILL HUNGRY! BRING ME MORE GRUB--AND BE QUICK ABOUT IT!
MY WRIST--!

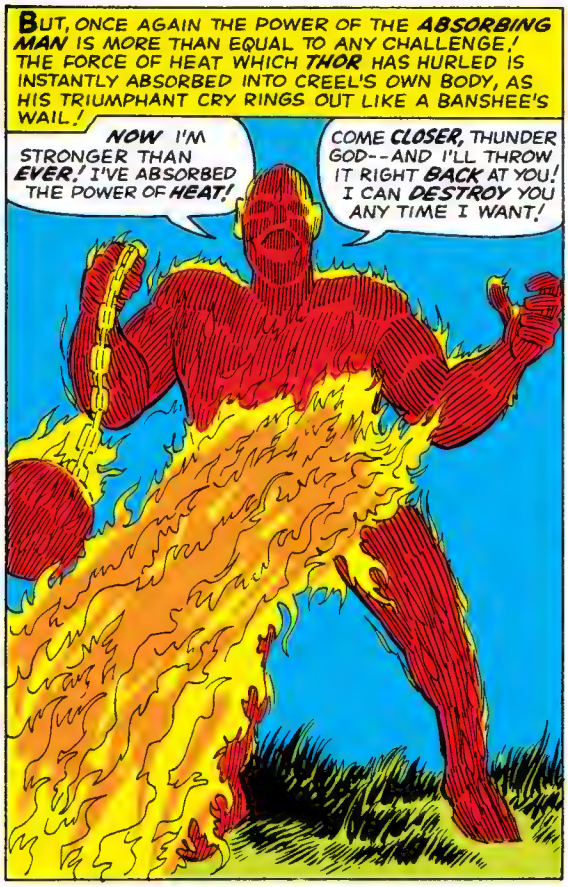

YOU'RE NOTHING BUT FLESH AND BLOOD RIGHT NOW! AND, EVEN IF YOU CHANGE TO T. N. T., YOU CAN'T SPEAK TO MY WIFE LIKE THAT!
OH! JOHN, MY DARLING--YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE--THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT HE'LL DO NOW!


TAKEN BY SURPRISE, THE CONVICT IS KNOCKED OFF BALANCE! BUT, REGAINING HIS FEET, HIS HAND TOUCHES HIS IRON BALL AND CHAIN, CAUSING ANOTHER AWESOME CHANGE...
JOHN! LOOK--HE-HE'S ABSORBED THE POWER OF IRON! WHAT WILL HE DO NEXT??

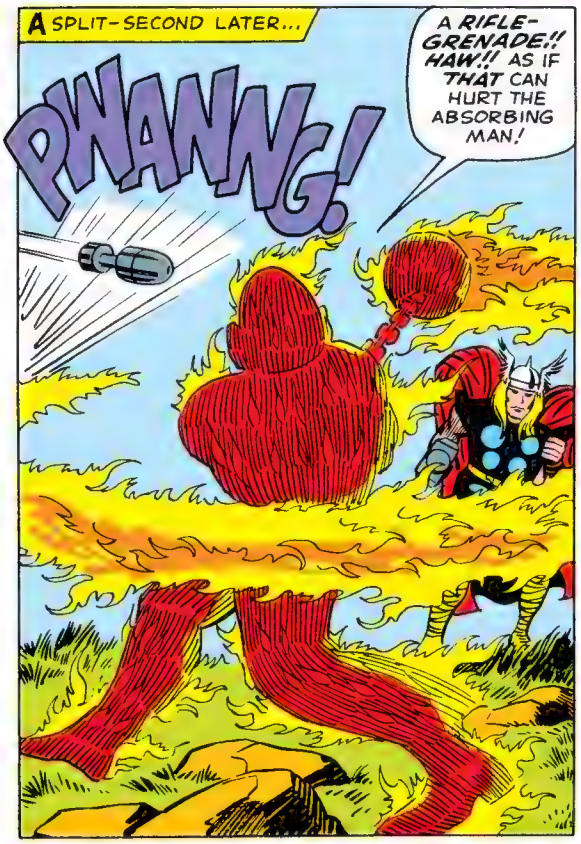

I AINT GONNA KEEP YOU IN SUSPENSE MUCH LONGER, LADY! I'M GONNA FINISH YOUR HUSBAND'S EDUCATION NOW!
HOLD IT, CREEL! THE HOUSE IS SURROUNDED! YOU HAVEN'T A CHANCE!
THE REPORTER! I WAS HOPIN' I'D SEE YOU AGAIN!

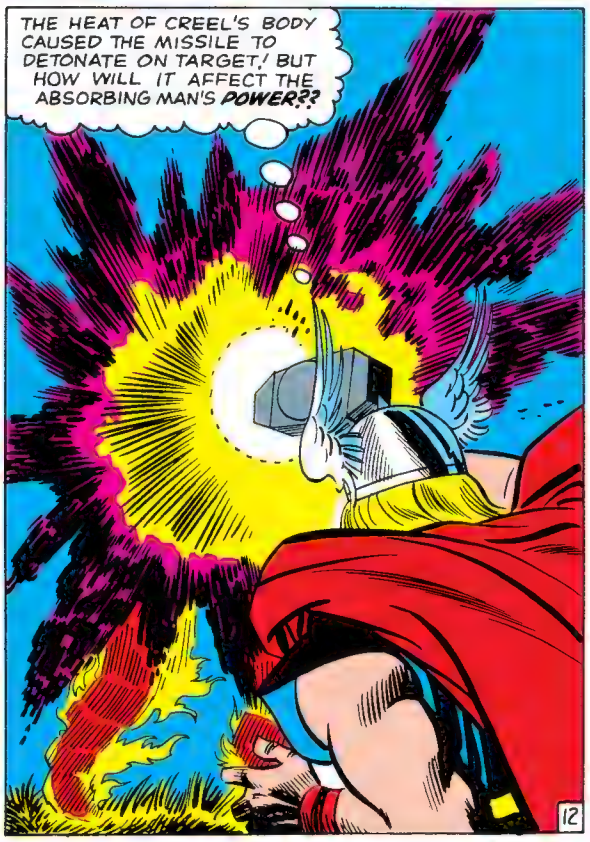
I'VE GOT TO TAUNT HIM, LIKE THOR SAID -- TO GET HIM OUT OF THE HOUSE!
A PHONY, AM I?? YOU'LL EAT THOSE WORDS, REPORTER!!
YOU'RE A PHONY, CREEL! THAT POWER OF YOURS IS JUST SOME SORT OF TRICK! NOBODY'S REALLY SCARED OF YOU!
CRASH!
I DID IT! NOW IT'S UP TO THOR!
ANYTHING PHONY ABOUT SMASHIN' MY WAY RIGHT THRU THE WALL OF A HOUSE?
COPS!! OKAY, IT'S JUST AS WELL! I'LL SHOW YA, ONCE AND FOR ALL, THAT NONE OF YA CAN STOP ME!
STAY BACK, CREEL!! DON'T MAKE US FIRE!
WE'RE NOT FOOLING, MISTER! THIS BAZOOKA MEANS BUSINESS!
NO! HOLD YOUR FIRE! IN THE NAME OF THE AVENGERS, I NOW TAKE COMMAND!
THE AVENGERS HAVE A-1 PRIORITY RATINGS! THOR OUT-RANKS US! DON'T FIRE THAT GUN!
CLANG!
THE THUNDER GOD!
YOU FOOL! BY HITTIN' MY BALL AND CHAIN, YOU MADE ME ABSORB THE STRENGTH OF YOUR HAMMER!
NO MATTER! THOUGH IT COSTS MY VERY LIFE, I MUST FORCE YOU TO DISPLAY THE FULL EXTENT OF YOUR EVIL POWER!
NEVER AGAIN SHALL YOU FIND A VICTIM UNAWARE!

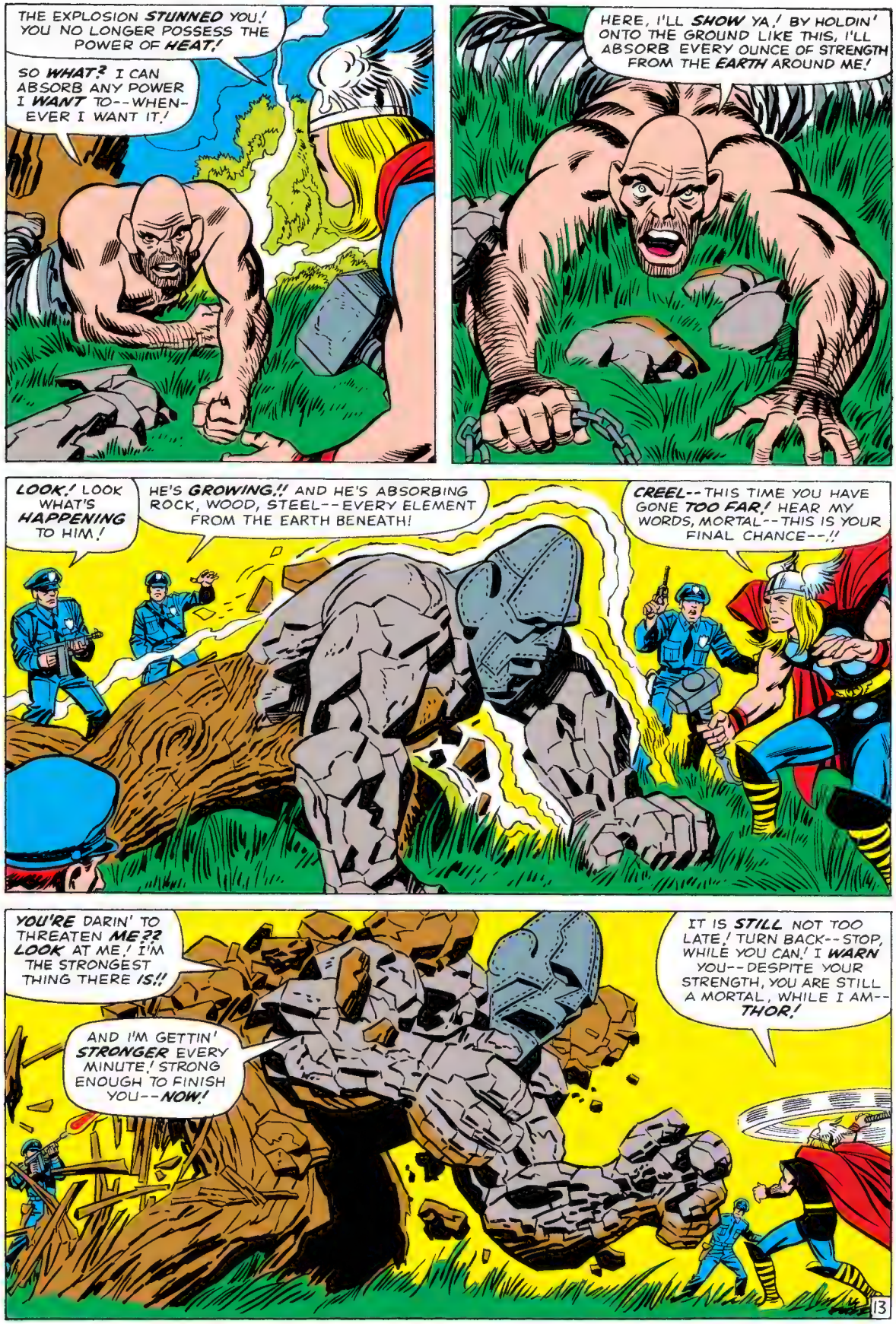
THUS, ONE OF THE MOST INCREDIBLE BATTLES OF ALL TIME BEGINS, AS THE NEARBY LAW OFFICERS WATCH IN STUNNED SILENCE -- REALIZING THAT THE MIGHTY THUNDER GOD HAS UNDERTAKEN A SEEMINGLY HOPELESS BATTLE IN ORDER TO GAIN TIME FOR THEM -- TIME TO STUDY THE ENEMY -- TIME TO DEVISE A DEFENSE AGAINST -- THE INDEFENSIBLE!!
HOW CAN I HOPE TO DEFEAT HIM WHEN MY STRENGTH BECOMES HIS STRENGTH -- MY POWER BECOMES HIS POWER?!!
I CAN ABSORB WHATEVER I'M HIT WITH!! THE MORE YA USE THAT HAMMER, THE MORE I ABSORB ITS POWER!!
THE HARDER YOU FIGHT, THE STRONGER MY OWN BALL AND CHAIN BECOMES!! YOU AINT GOT A CHANCE -- NOBODY'S GOT A CHANCE!
THE ABSORBING MAN CAN DO ANYTHING -- STOP ANYONE!! LOOK! LOOK HOW I BATTER YOU TO YOUR KNEES -- BY ABSORBIN' YOUR OWN STRENGTH!
TRULY, I DARE NOT RESORT TO BRUTE STRENGTH AGAIN! INSTEAD, BY MY POWER OVER NATURE'S ELEMENTS, LET AN IRRESISTIBLE FORCE OF HEAT TRAP HIM WITHIN AN UNBREAKABLE VISE!
11


BUT, ONCE AGAIN THE POWER OF THE ABSORBING MAN IS MORE THAN EQUAL TO ANY CHALLENGE,! THE FORCE OF HEAT WHICH THOR HAS HURLED IS INSTANTLY ABSORBED INTO CREEL'S OWN BODY, AS HIS TRIUMPHANT CRY RINGS OUT LIKE A BANSHEE'S WAIL.!
NOW I'M STRONGER THAN EVER,! I'VE ABSORBED THE POWER OF HEAT!
COME CLOSER, THUNDER GOD--AND I'LL THROW IT RIGHT BACK AT YOU! I CAN DESTROY YOU ANY TIME I WANT!

WE CAN'T STAND IDLY BY THIS WAY,!! WE'VE GOT TO HELP THOR--SOMEHOW,!! ORDER THE MEN TO STAND BY, COLLINS,! I'M GOING TO GIVE HIM A BLAST WITH A RIFLE GRENADE.!
YES SIR, CAPTAIN.!
HEADS UP, THERE.! LOOK ALIVE, MEN --DON'T TAKE YOUR EYES OFF CREEL.!

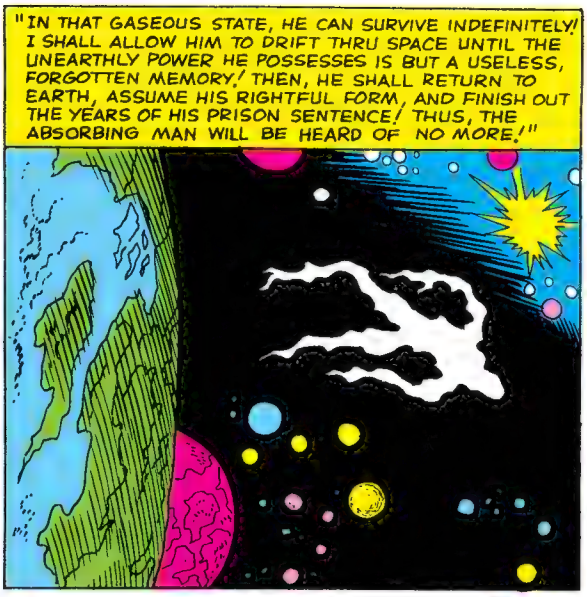

A SPLIT-SECOND LATER...
PWANNG!
A RIFLE-GRENADE!! HAW!! AS IF THAT CAN HURT THE ABSORBING MAN!


THE HEAT OF CREEL'S BODY CAUSED THE MISSILE TO DETONATE ON TARGET,! BUT HOW WILL IT AFFECT THE ABSORBING MAN'S POWER??
12

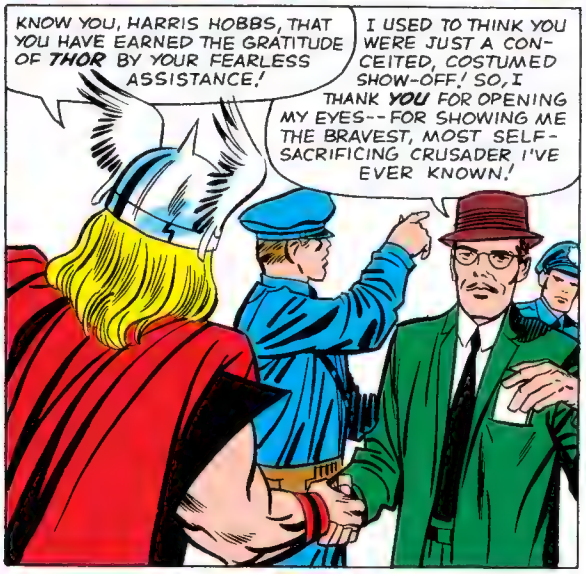

THE EXPLOSION STUNNED YOU! YOU NO LONGER POSSESS THE POWER OF HEAT!
SO WHAT? I CAN ABSORB ANY POWER I WANT TO--WHENEVER I WANT IT!
HERE, I'LL SHOW YA! BY HOLDIN' ONTO THE GROUND LIKE THIS, I'LL ABSORB EVERY OUNCE OF STRENGTH FROM THE EARTH AROUND ME!
LOOK! LOOK WHAT'S HAPPENING TO HIM!
HE'S GROWING!! AND HE'S ABSORBING ROCK, WOOD, STEEL--EVERY ELEMENT FROM THE EARTH BENEATH!
CREEL--THIS TIME YOU HAVE GONE TOO FAR! HEAR MY WORDS, MORTAL--THIS IS YOUR FINAL CHANCE--!!
YOU'RE DARIN' TO THREATEN ME?? LOOK AT ME! I'M THE STRONGEST THING THERE IS!!
AND I'M GETTIN' STRONGER EVERY MINUTE! STRONG ENOUGH TO FINISH YOU--NOW!
IT IS STILL NOT TOO LATE! TURN BACK--STOP, WHILE YOU CAN! I WARN YOU--DESPITE YOUR STRENGTH, YOU ARE STILL A MORTAL, WHILE I AM--THOR!
13

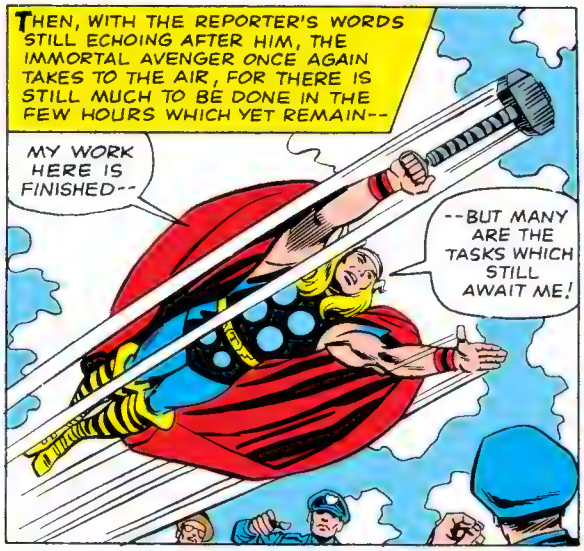
UNFLINCHING, THE THUNDER GOD WAITS FOR A REPLY FROM HIS GIGANTIC FOE--BUT, NONE IS FORTHCOMING! INSTEAD, A MONSTROUS FIST IS RAISED ABOVE THE GOLDEN HEAD--AND THEN, AT THAT INSTANT, CRUSHER CREEL'S TIME RUNS OUT!
YOU HAVE MADE YOUR CHOICE! NOW, THERE IS NO TURNING BACK! NEVER AGAIN SHALL THE ABSORBING MAN MENACE HUMANITY!
YOUR HAMMER!! IT'S WHIRLIN' SO FAST--CAN'T SEE IT!! WHA--WHAT'S HAPPENIN'??
I TRIED TO WARN YOU! BY SPINNING MY ENCHANTED HAMMER AT CYCLOTRONIC SPEED, I HAVE THE POWER TO TRANSMUTE THE ELEMENTS THEMSELVES!
THUS DO YOU MAKE YOUR NEXT CHANGE--THE ONE WHICH IS DESTINED TO BE YOUR FINAL CHANGE!
IT WAS LIKE A NUCLEAR EXPLOSION! EVEN THE GROUND IS GLAZED!
BUT, WHAT HAPPENED TO THE ABSORBING MAN?? WHERE DID HE GO??
I SHALL EXPLAIN! BUT YOU MUST PREPARE YOURSELF FOR THE UNBELIEVABLE!
KNOWING THAT HE ABSORBED EVERY POWER, EVERY ELEMENT HE CAME IN CONTACT WITH, I REALIZED MY ONLY HOPE OF BEATING HIM WAS TO CREATE ONE SPECIAL ELEMENT!
WHAT ELEMENT WAS THAT?
HELIUM!! HE ABSORBED THE QUALITY OF HELIUM GAS--THERE! SEE FOR YOURSELF!
14

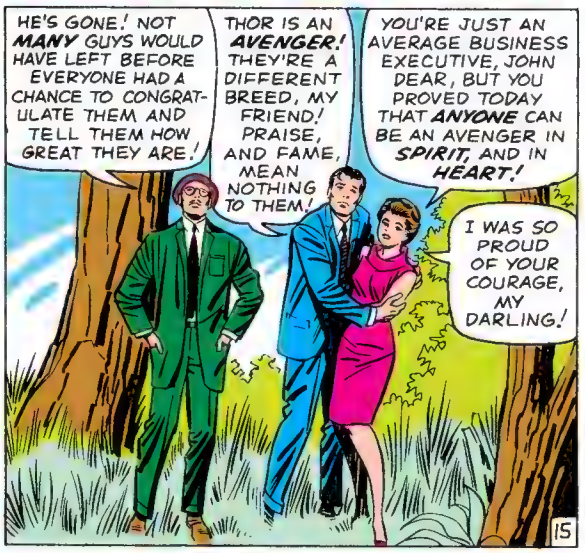
HE HAS BECOME LIGHTER THAN AIR, AND IS SWIFTLY BEING DRAWN INTO THE ATMOSPHERE, AS I PLANNED!


"IN THAT GASEOUS STATE, HE CAN SURVIVE INDEFINITELY! I SHALL ALLOW HIM TO DRIFT THRU SPACE UNTIL THE UNEARTHLY POWER HE POSSESSES IS BUT A USELESS, FORGOTTEN MEMORY! THEN, HE SHALL RETURN TO EARTH, ASSUME HIS RIGHTFUL FORM, AND FINISH OUT THE YEARS OF HIS PRISON SENTENCE! THUS, THE ABSORBING MAN WILL BE HEARD OF NO MORE!"

WHEW! I WANTED A SCOOP--BUT NO NEWSPAPER WOULD PRINT A YARN LIKE THIS! I'LL HAVE TO SELL IT TO A SCIENCE-FICTION MAG!
IT WOULD REQUIRE THE WISDOM OF ODIN FOR ANY MORTAL TO SAY WHERE SCIENCE ENDS AND FICTION BEGINS!


KNOW YOU, HARRIS HOBBS, THAT YOU HAVE EARNED THE GRATITUDE OF THOR BY YOUR FEARLESS ASSISTANCE!
I USED TO THINK YOU WERE JUST A CONCEITED, COSTUMED SHOW-OFF! SO, I THANK YOU FOR OPENING MY EYES--FOR SHOWING ME THE BRAVEST, MOST SELF-SACRIFICING CRUSADER I'VE EVER KNOWN!


THEN, WITH THE REPORTER'S WORDS STILL ECHOING AFTER HIM, THE IMMORTAL AVENGER ONCE AGAIN TAKES TO THE AIR, FOR THERE IS STILL MUCH TO BE DONE IN THE FEW HOURS WHICH YET REMAIN--
MY WORK HERE IS FINISHED--
--BUT MANY ARE THE TASKS WHICH STILL AWAIT ME!


HE'S GONE! NOT MANY GUYS WOULD HAVE LEFT BEFORE EVERYONE HAD A CHANCE TO CONGRATULATE THEM AND TELL THEM HOW GREAT THEY ARE!
THOR IS AN AVENGER! THEY'RE A DIFFERENT BREED, MY FRIEND! PRAISE, AND FAME, MEAN NOTHING TO THEM!
YOU'RE JUST AN AVERAGE BUSINESS EXECUTIVE, JOHN DEAR, BUT YOU PROVED TODAY THAT ANYONE CAN BE AN AVENGER IN SPIRIT, AND IN HEART!
I WAS SO PROUD OF YOUR COURAGE, MY DARLING!

MEANWHILE...
MY TIME IS NEARLY UP! I MUST RETURN TO ASGARD WITHIN THE HOUR!
BUT FIRST, I MUST GAZE ONCE MORE UPON MY BELOVED!
FOR, IF I FAIL THE TRIAL OF THE GODS, THIS WILL SURELY BE MY FINAL LOOK!
THEN, AT THAT VERY MOMENT...
YOUR TIME HAS COME, THUNDER GOD! THE TRIAL AWAITS THEE...
I HEAR--AND I OBEY!
TO ASGARD, THEN--!
LOKI WILL HAVE HAD ALL THIS TIME TO PREPARE FOR OUR TRIAL--AND YET, I MUST NOT WAVER!
WHATEVER MY FATE, I SHALL FACE IT---
--LIKE A GOD!
THUS, THE GOD OF THUNDER STRIDES UNFLINCHINGLY TOWARDS THE SHIMMERING LIGHTS OF ASGARD, TO FACE THE MYSTERIOUS TRIAL OF THE GODS! NEXT ISSUE YOU SHALL BE AMONG THE FIRST MORTALS EVER TO BEHOLD THIS STARTLING SPECTACLE! TILL THEN, MAY THE BLESSINGS OF THE GODS BE SHOWERED UPON THEE! SO BE IT!

Tales of ASGARD
HOME OF THE MIGHTY NORSE GODS!
ONCE AGAIN, MORE OF THE EARLY LIFE OF EVIL LOKI!
"A VIPER IN OUR MIDST!"
GHAN, MOST DEADLY OF THE STORM GIANTS, IS ABOUT TO ATTACK ASGARD, AS YOUNG THOR LEADS A TASK FORCE TO BATTLE THE TITANIC INVADER!
I SHOULD BE LEADING THIS PATROL, RATHER THAN MY ACCURSED HALF-BROTHER! I MUST FIND A WAY TO MAKE HIM FAIL!
ANOTHER GREAT LEGEND LIVES AGAIN IN ALL ITS POMP AND PAGEANTRY!
STAND FAST! THE GIANT APPROACHES! NOW WE SHALL PROVE OUR METTLE!
ONCE AGAIN, THE ART OF ILLO-DRAMA REACHES THE PINNACLE OF CLASSIC PERFECTION UNDER THE TALENTED HANDS OF--
STAN LEE, WRITER
JACK KIRBY, ILLUSTRATOR
VINCE COLLETTA, DELINEATOR
ARTIE SIMEK, LETTERER
1

SUPREMELY CONFIDENT, BECAUSE OF HIS GARGANTUAN SIZE, THE RAMPAGING STORM GIANT HURLS A MONSTROUS BOULDER WITH THE FORCE OF A THUNDERCLAP!
DEATH TO THE PUNY LEGIONS OF ODIN!

BUT, FEARLESSLY WIELDING HIS ENCHANTED HAMMER, THE VALIANT THOR SHATTERS GHAN'S CAREENING BOULDER INTO A THOUSAND FRAGMENTS!
FOR ASGARD!

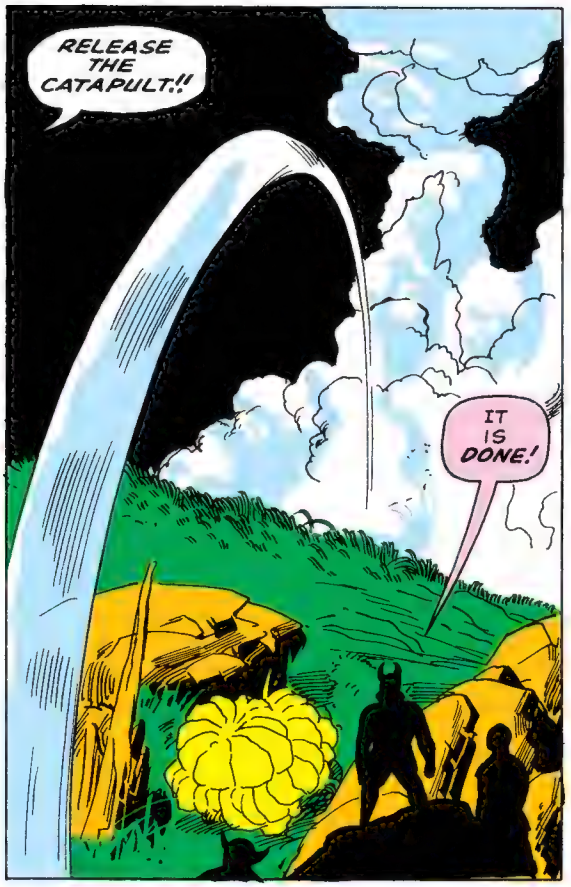
THUS, THE BATTLE BEGINS! BUT, ONE THERE IS WHO HANGS BACK-- OUT OF HARM'S WAY...
LET THE OTHERS DO THE FIGHTING! LET THEM SUFFER THE INJURIES AND THE PAIN!
THE CUNNING LOKI IS FAR TOO CLEVER TO TAKE NEEDLESS CHANCES! I SHALL REMAIN HERE, IN SAFETY--AND PLAN THE DEFEAT OF MY HATED HALF-BROTHER!

THE ENCHANTMENT OF MY FLASHING SWORD SHALL UNDO ALL THAT THE THUNDER GOD'S HAMMER CAN HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH!
I SHALL CAST A SPELL TO GIVE GHAN THE FINAL VICTORY--AND THUS SHALL I CAUSE THE DOWNFALL OF HE WHOM I SO DESPISE!

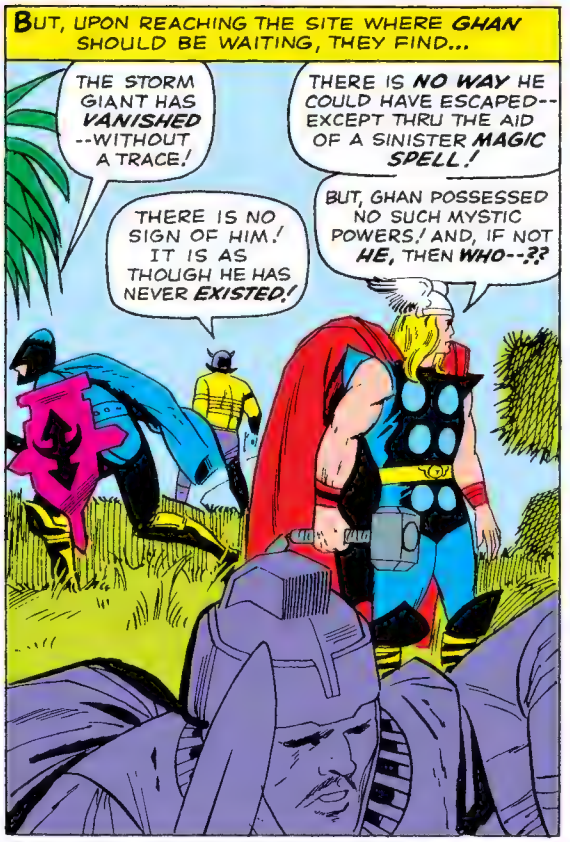
BUT, BEFORE LOKI'S EVIL SPELL CAN TAKE EFFECT, THE ARROWS OF THE WARRIORS OF ASGARD CAUSE THE LUMBERING STORM GIANT TO HALT HIS DEVASTATING ATTACK--!
SEE HOW THE VILLAINOUS GHAN FEARS TO ADVANCE ANY FURTHER!
LET YOUR CROSSBOWS SING! HE MUST NOW BE DRIVEN BACK!

THEN, SUDDENLY, WITH AN EAR-PIERCING ROAR OF HELPLESS RAGE, THE BRUTAL BEHEMOTH TURNS AND FLEES FROM HIS SMALLER FOES!

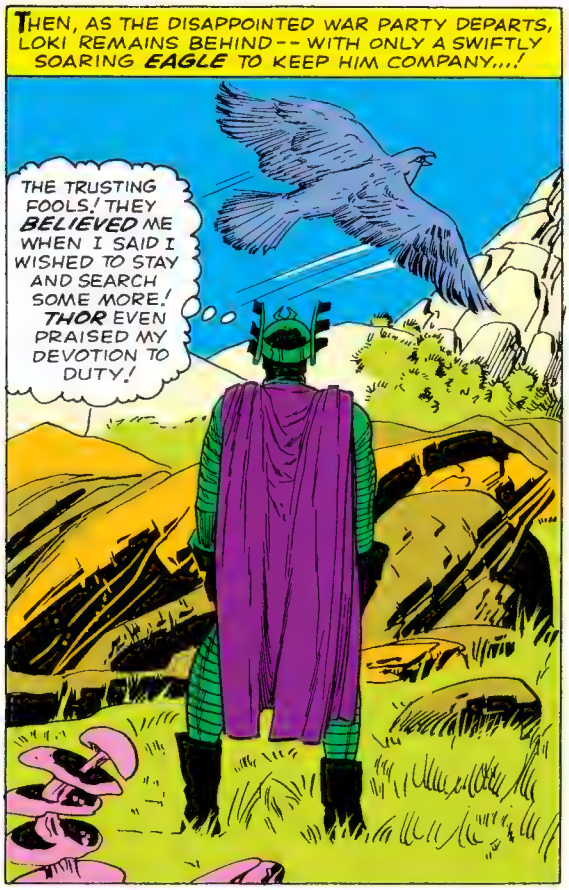
HE MUST NOT ESCAPE US! PREPARE TO LET LOOSE THE CATAPULT!
THE SLEEP FUMES WITHIN THIS CONTAINER WILL MAKE HIM LOSE THE WILL TO FIGHT AS SOON AS HE INHALES THEM!


RELEASE THE CATAPULT!!
IT IS DONE!

FORWARD, WARRIORS OF ASGARD! WE MUST SEIZE THE GIANT INVADER BEFORE THE FUMES ARE BLOWN AWAY!

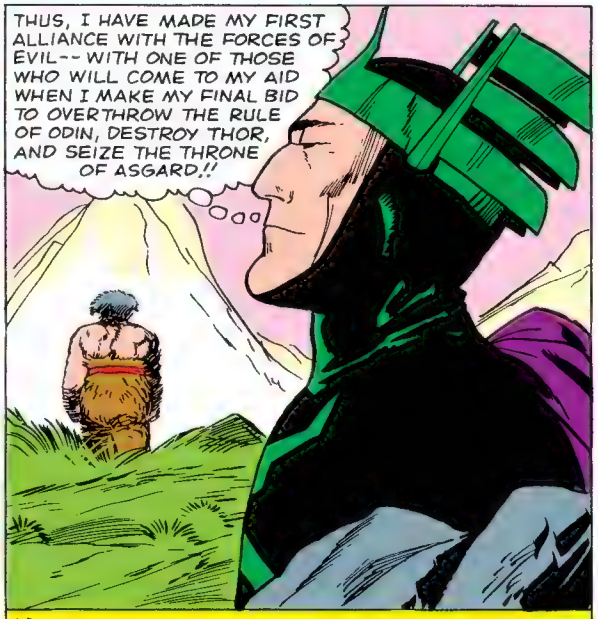

BUT, UPON REACHING THE SITE WHERE GHAN SHOULD BE WAITING, THEY FIND...
THE STORM GIANT HAS VANISHED --WITHOUT A TRACE!
THERE IS NO SIGN OF HIM! IT IS AS THOUGH HE HAS NEVER EXISTED!
THERE IS NO WAY HE COULD HAVE ESCAPED-- EXCEPT THRU THE AID OF A SINISTER MAGIC SPELL!
BUT, GHAN POSSESSED NO SUCH MYSTIC POWERS! AND, IF NOT HE, THEN WHO--??

THUS PUZZLED, THE NOBLE THUNDER GOD SCANS THE HORIZON, SEARCHING FOR SOME UNEXPECTED FOE-- BUT, IN VAIN! FOR, NEVER WOULD AN IMMORTAL OF ASGARD SUSPECT THAT ONE OF HIS OWN COULD BE A SCHEMING TRAITOR--!
I'VE DONE IT! I'VE SEIZED VICTORY FROM MY UNWITTING HALF-BROTHER! THIS SHALL BE THE FIRST OF MANY FAILURES FOR THOR!


THEN, AS THE DISAPPOINTED WAR PARTY DEPARTS, LOKI REMAINS BEHIND -- WITH ONLY A SWIFTLY SOARING EAGLE TO KEEP HIM COMPANY....!
THE TRUSTING FOOLS! THEY BELIEVED ME WHEN I SAID I WISHED TO STAY AND SEARCH SOME MORE! THOR EVEN PRAISED MY DEVOTION TO DUTY!

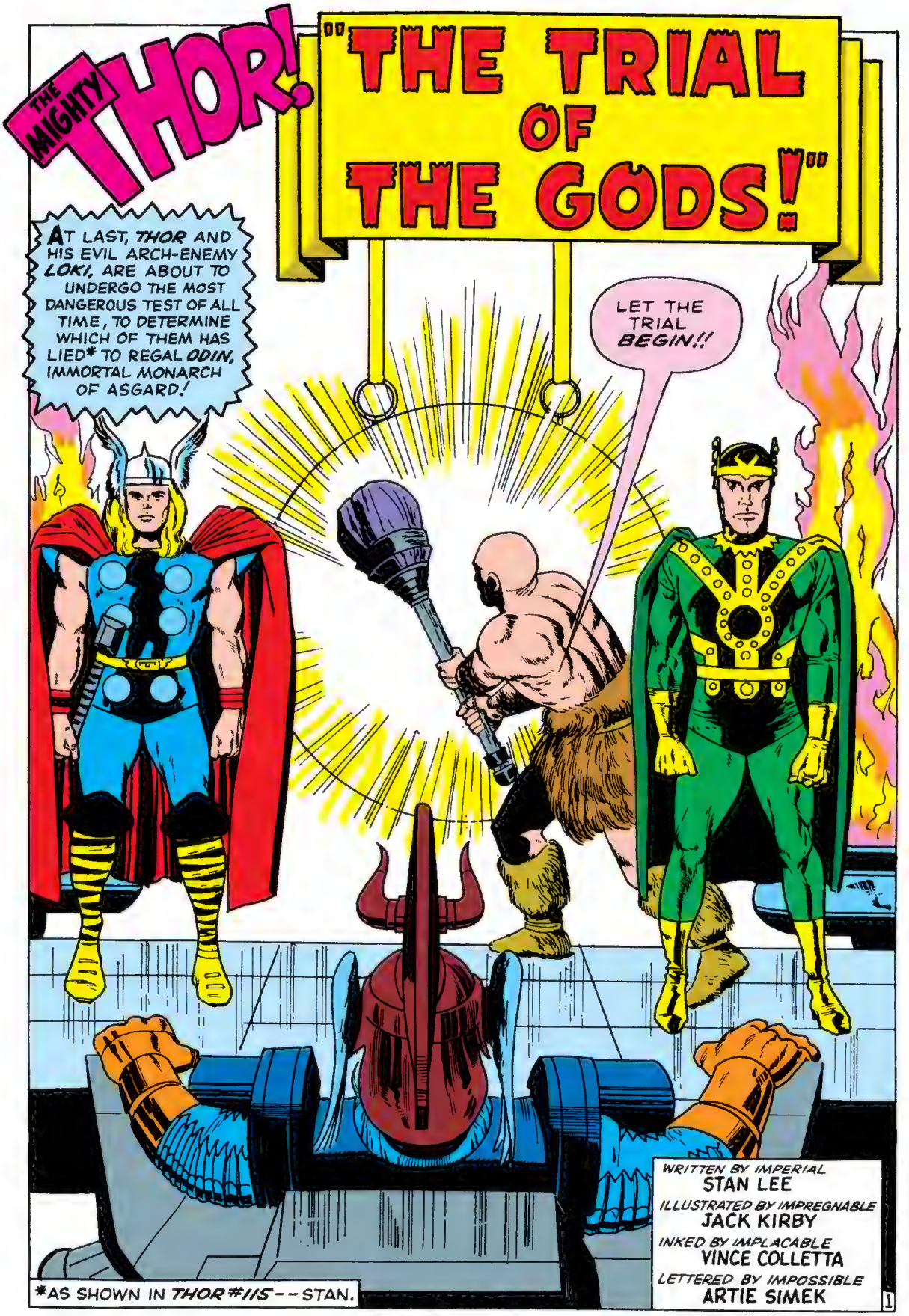
AND, AS SOON AS THE VALIANT BAND OF WARRIORS ARE SAFELY OUT OF SIGHT, THE CUNNING GOD OF EVIL MAKES A MYSTIC GESTURE, CAUSING THE HIGH-FLYING BIRD OF PREY TO RETURN TO ITS NATURAL FORM...
LET THE GIANT GHAN APPEAR ONCE MORE!
LOKI! YOU HAVE SAVED ME FROM THE VENGEANCE OF THOR!

I KNOW NOT WHAT MOTIVES CAUSED YOU TO BETRAY YOUR OWN KIND, BUT THAT IS NO CONCERN OF MINE! KNOW YOU, LOKI, THAT GHAN IS IN YOUR DEBT!
I SHALL NEVER FORGET IT, GIGANTIC ONE -- AND NEITHER SHALL YOU! THE DAY WILL COME WHEN I ORDER YOU TO REPAY THIS DEBT!

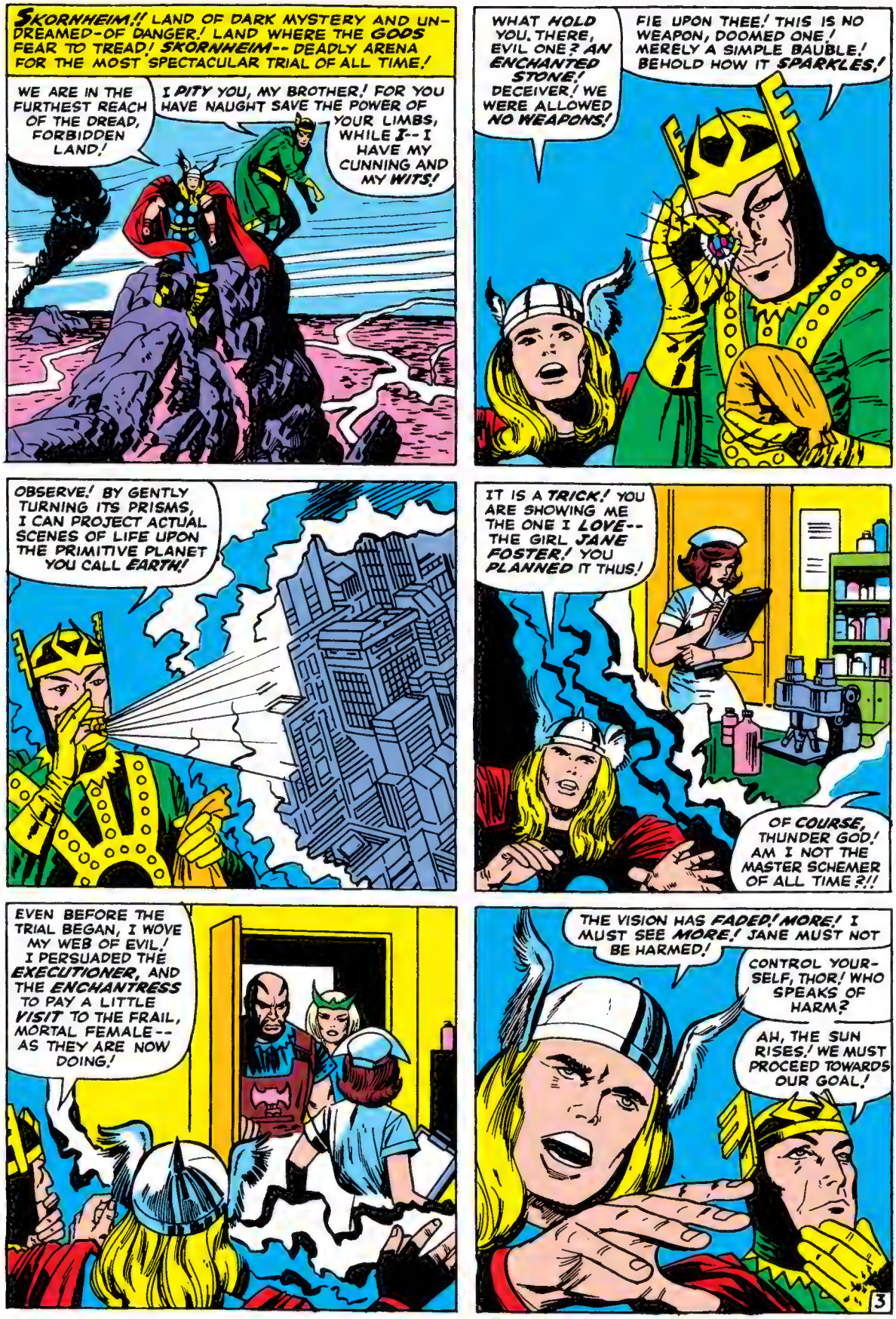

THUS, I HAVE MADE MY FIRST ALLIANCE WITH THE FORCES OF EVIL -- WITH ONE OF THOSE WHO WILL COME TO MY AID WHEN I MAKE MY FINAL BID TO OVERTHROW THE RULE OF ODIN, DESTROY THOR, AND SEIZE THE THRONE OF ASGARD!!

YOU HAVE BEEN PRIVILEGED TO PEER MANY MANY AGES BACK -- BACK INTO THE EARLY HISTORY OF ASGARD, WHEN THE TRUE MENACE OF LOKI WAS JUST BEGINNING TO MAKE ITSELF KNOWN! SEE HOW THE GOD OF EVIL CONTINUES HIS EFFORT TO MUSTER ADDITIONAL ALLIES IN OUR NEXT GREAT ISSUE, AND IN MANY ISSUES TO COME! SEE ALSO WHY TALES OF ASGARD HAS WON UNIVERSAL ACCLAIM AS THE MOST ARTISTIC, THE MOST CLASSICAL ENDEAVOR IN THIS, THE MARVEL AGE OF COMICS!

JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY
WITH
THE MIGHTY
THOR
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
IND.
MARVEL COMICS GROUP 12¢
THE TIME HAS COME FOR...
"THE TRIAL OF THE GODS!"
116
MAY

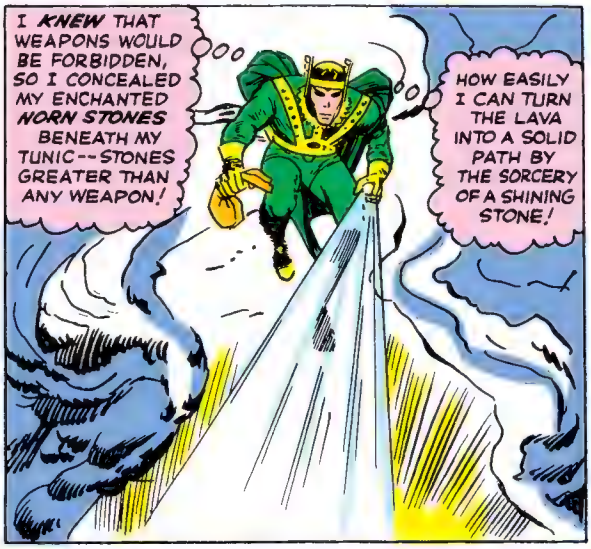

THE MIGHTY THOR!
"THE TRIAL OF THE GODS!"
AT LAST, THOR AND HIS EVIL ARCH-ENEMY LOKI, ARE ABOUT TO UNDERGO THE MOST DANGEROUS TEST OF ALL TIME, TO DETERMINE WHICH OF THEM HAS LIED* TO REGAL ODIN, IMMORTAL MONARCH OF ASGARD!
LET THE TRIAL BEGIN!!
*AS SHOWN IN THOR #115 -- STAN.
WRITTEN BY IMPERIAL
STAN LEE
ILLUSTRATED BY IMPREGNABLE
JACK KIRBY
INKED BY IMPLACABLE
VINCE COLLETTA
LETTERED BY IMPOSSIBLE
ARTIE SIMEK
1

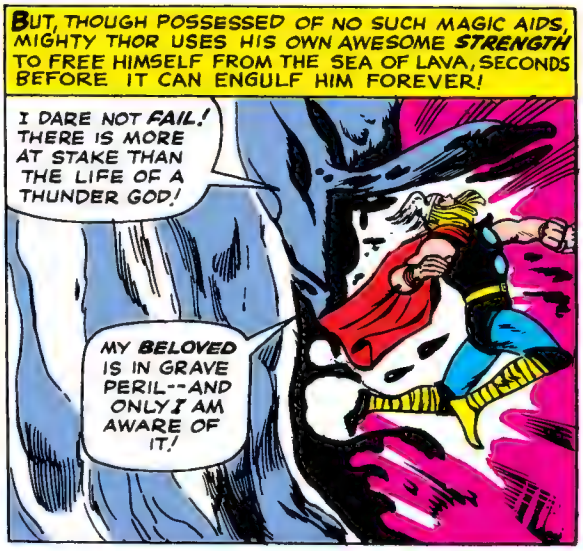
A HUSH FALLS OVER THE GREAT CASTLE HALL AS THE COMMANDING VOICE OF ODIN FILLS THE VAST CHAMBER LIKE THE ROAR OF A THOUSAND CANNONS!
I ORDER YOU BOTH TO SKORNHEIM, THE DEADLY LAND BEYOND THE PALE OF ASGARD!
YOU WILL BE UNARMED, SAVE FOR YOUR WITS, AND YOUR OWN NATURAL STRENGTH!
MARK YOU WELL--EVEN AN IMMORTAL MAY FIND DEATH WITHIN FORBIDDEN SKORNHEIM!
BUT, IF YOU SHOULD SURVIVE, THE FIRST ONE TO RETURN TO ASGARD WILL BE ADJUDGED THE VICTOR! THAT IS ALL!
YIELD YOUR HAMMER, THUNDER GOD! YOU MAY CARRY NO WEAPON!
SO BE IT, NOBLE FATHER!
AND NOW, BY THE POWER OF MY OMNIPOTENCE, I WILL CAUSE YOU BOTH TO BE TRANSPORTED--TO SKORNHEIM!
I HAVE SPOKEN!
2

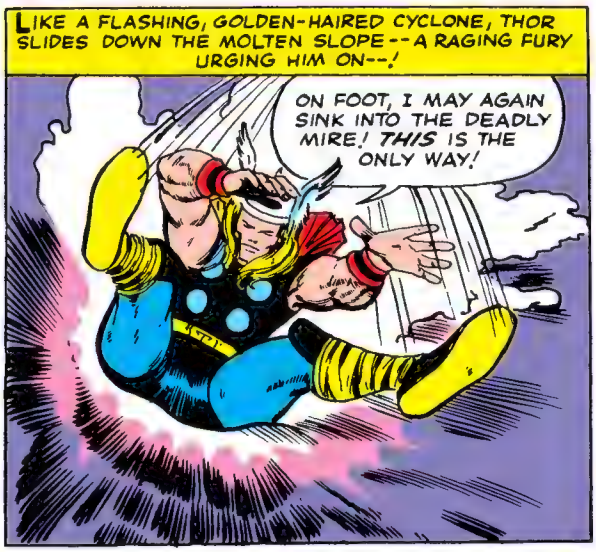

SKORNHEIM!! LAND OF DARK MYSTERY AND UN-DREAMED-OF DANGER! LAND WHERE THE GODS FEAR TO TREAD! SKORNHEIM-- DEADLY ARENA FOR THE MOST SPECTACULAR TRIAL OF ALL TIME!
WE ARE IN THE FURTHEST REACH OF THE DREAD, FORBIDDEN LAND!
I PITY YOU, MY BROTHER! FOR YOU HAVE NAUGHT SAVE THE POWER OF YOUR LIMBS, WHILE I-- I HAVE MY CUNNING AND MY WITS!
WHAT HOLD YOU, THERE, EVIL ONE? AN ENCHANTED STONE! DECEIVER! WE WERE ALLOWED NO WEAPONS!
FIE UPON THEE! THIS IS NO WEAPON, DOOMED ONE! MERELY A SIMPLE BAUBLE! BEHOLD HOW IT SPARKLES!
OBSERVE! BY GENTLY TURNING ITS PRISMS, I CAN PROJECT ACTUAL SCENES OF LIFE UPON THE PRIMITIVE PLANET YOU CALL EARTH!
IT IS A TRICK! YOU ARE SHOWING ME THE ONE I LOVE-- THE GIRL JANE FOSTER! YOU PLANNED IT THUS!
OF COURSE, THUNDER GOD! AM I NOT THE MASTER SCHEMER OF ALL TIME?!!
EVEN BEFORE THE TRIAL BEGAN, I WOVE MY WEB OF EVIL! I PERSUADED THE EXECUTIONER, AND THE ENCHANTRESS TO PAY A LITTLE VISIT TO THE FRAIL, MORTAL FEMALE-- AS THEY ARE NOW DOING!
THE VISION HAS FADED! MORE! I MUST SEE MORE! JANE MUST NOT BE HARMED!
CONTROL YOURSELF, THOR! WHO SPEAKS OF HARM?
AH, THE SUN RISES! WE MUST PROCEED TOWARDS OUR GOAL!
3

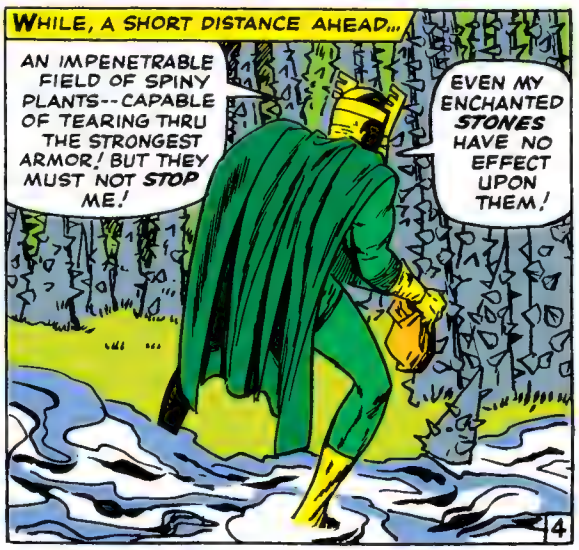
SAVAGELY, MIGHTY THOR LUNGES AT THE LEERING LOKI! BUT, TENSE AND SHAKEN AT THE PLIGHT OF HIS LOVED ONE, THE IMMORTAL AVENGER MISSES HIS FOOTING, SINKING INTO THE FLUID SOIL BENEATH HIS FEET!
AHH! YOU FORGOT THAT EVERY INCH OF SKORN-HEIM CAN TURN INTO A LETHAL TRAP!

THE HILL TURNS TO QUICKSAND BENEATH THE RAYS OF SKORNHEIM'S BURNING SUN!
NOW, THUNDER GOD, WHILE YOU FLOUNDER, LOKI SHALL ESCAPE WITH EASE!

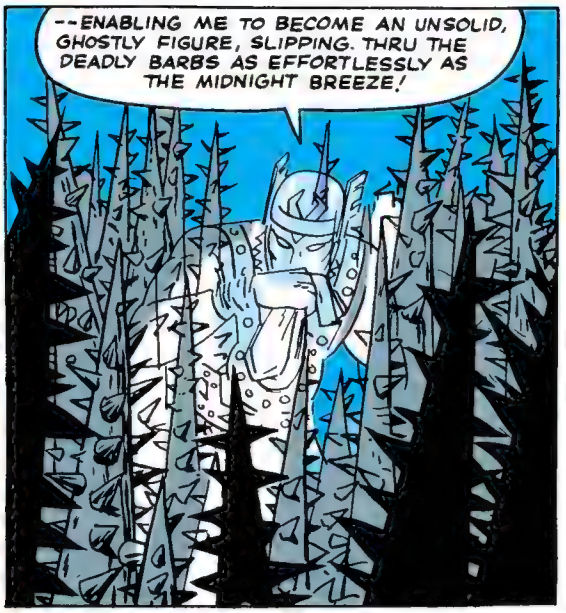

I KNEW THAT WEAPONS WOULD BE FORBIDDEN, SO I CONCEALED MY ENCHANTED NORN STONES BENEATH MY TUNIC--STONES GREATER THAN ANY WEAPON!
HOW EASILY I CAN TURN THE LAVA INTO A SOLID PATH BY THE SORCERY OF A SHINING STONE!


BUT, THOUGH POSSESSED OF NO SUCH MAGIC AIDS, MIGHTY THOR USES HIS OWN AWESOME STRENGTH TO FREE HIMSELF FROM THE SEA OF LAVA, SECONDS BEFORE IT CAN ENGULF HIM FOREVER!
I DARE NOT FAIL! THERE IS MORE AT STAKE THAN THE LIFE OF A THUNDER GOD!
MY BELOVED IS IN GRAVE PERIL--AND ONLY I AM AWARE OF IT!


LIKE A FLASHING, GOLDEN-HAIRED CYCLONE, THOR SLIDES DOWN THE MOLTEN SLOPE--A RAGING FURY URGING HIM ON--!
ON FOOT, I MAY AGAIN SINK INTO THE DEADLY MIRE! THIS IS THE ONLY WAY!

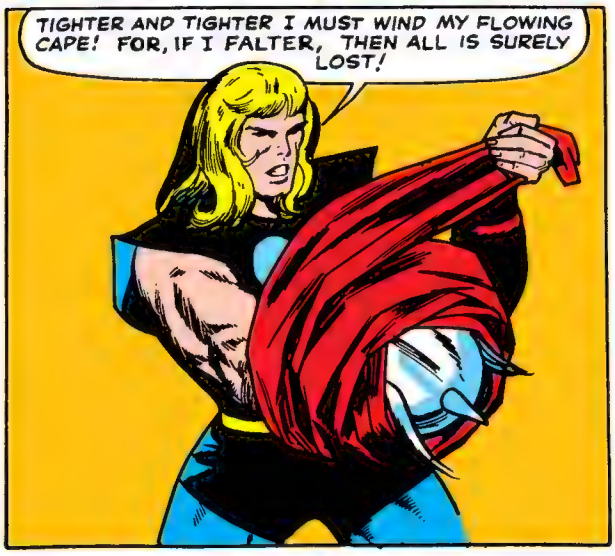

WHILE, A SHORT DISTANCE AHEAD...
AN IMPENETRABLE FIELD OF SPINY PLANTS--CAPABLE OF TEARING THRU THE STRONGEST ARMOR! BUT THEY MUST NOT STOP ME!
EVEN MY ENCHANTED STONES HAVE NO EFFECT UPON THEM!

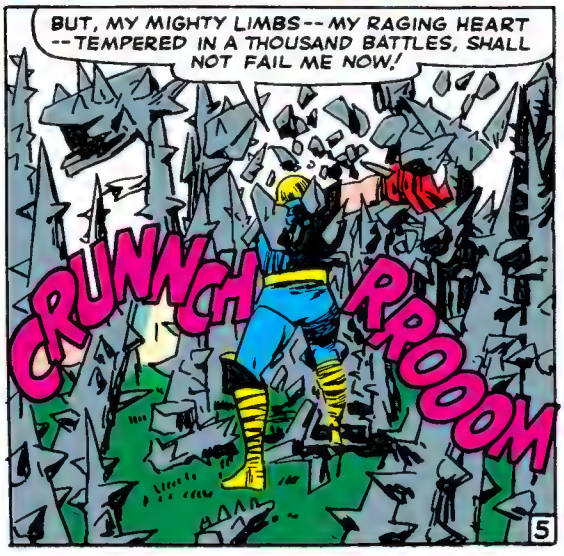
BUT, MY CUNNING SHALL YET SAVE THE DAY!
THOUGH THE NORN STONES CANNOT AFFECT THE PLANTS, THEY HAVE THE POWER TO TRANSFORM MY OWN BODY'S MOLECULES--!

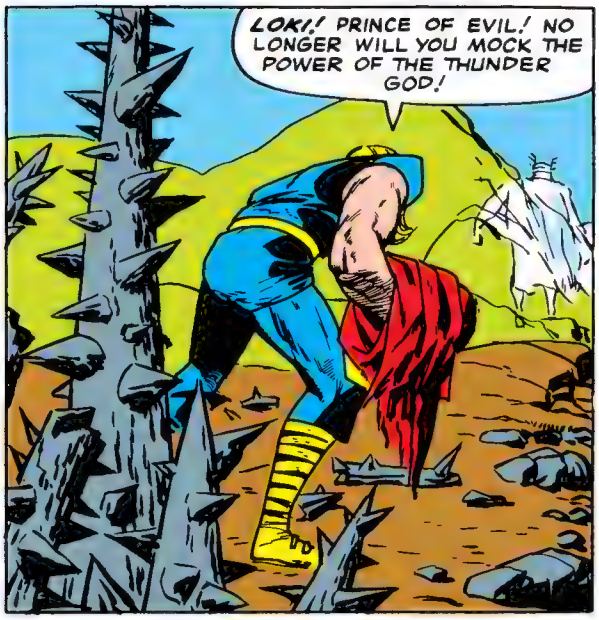

--ENABLING ME TO BECOME AN UNSOLID, GHOSTLY FIGURE, SLIPPING THRU THE DEADLY BARBS AS EFFORTLESSLY AS THE MIDNIGHT BREEZE!

AND, SECONDS LATER...
AGAIN THE EVIL ONE HAS USED A FORBIDDEN SPELL TO GAIN THE ADVANTAGE!
BUT, BY THE STARS OF ASGARD, I SHALL NOT BE STOPPED!

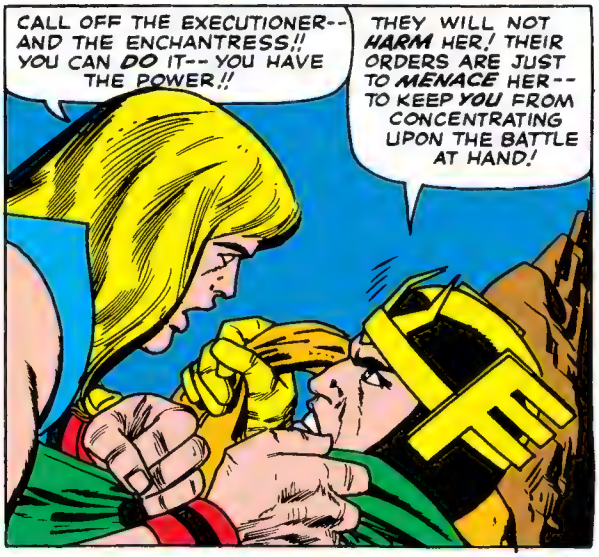
MY POWER IS IN MY SINEWS--AND THEY SHALL NOT FAIL ME NOW!
IN PLACE OF A MYSTIC STONE, MY OWN HELMET SHALL SERVE ME!

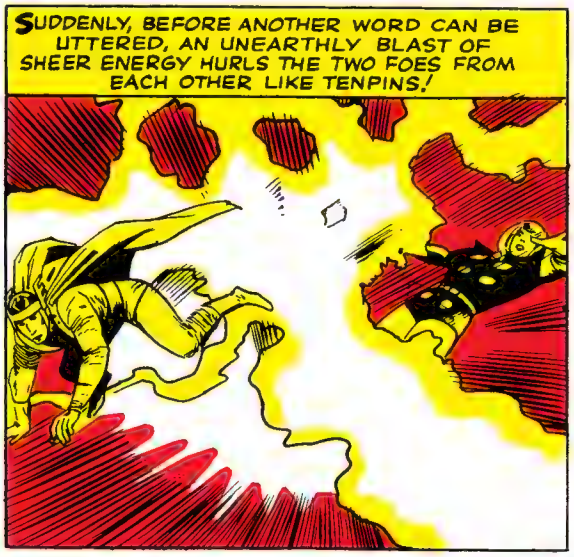

TIGHTER AND TIGHTER I MUST WIND MY FLOWING CAPE! FOR, IF I FALTER, THEN ALL IS SURELY LOST!

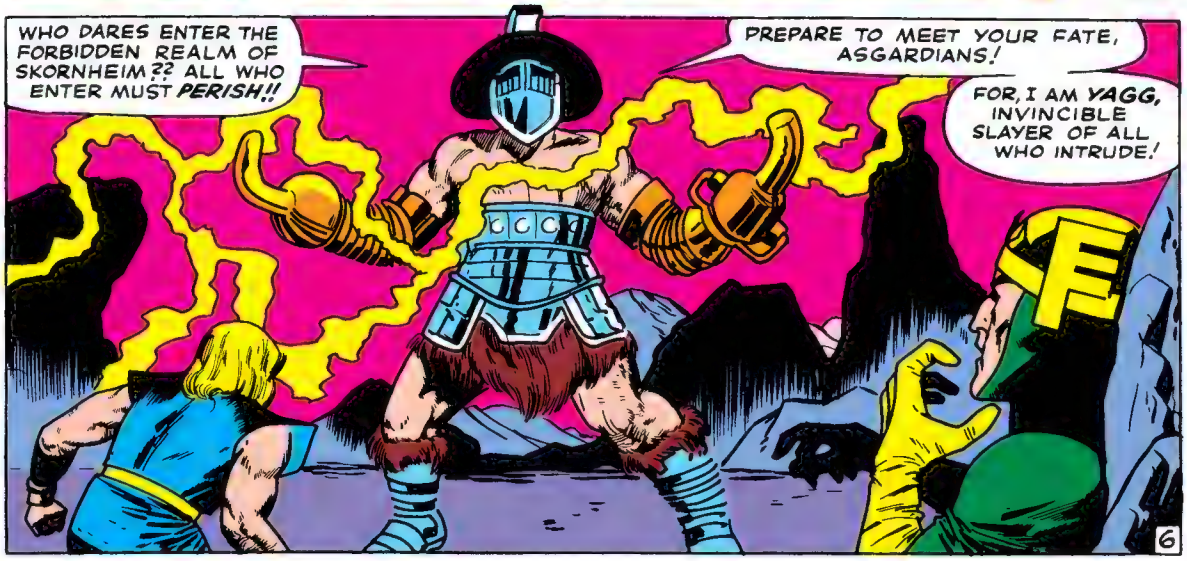

BUT, MY MIGHTY LIMBS--MY RAGING HEART --TEMPERED IN A THOUSAND BATTLES, SHALL NOT FAIL ME NOW!
CRUNNCH
RROOOM


LOKI! PRINCE OF EVIL! NO LONGER WILL YOU MOCK THE POWER OF THE THUNDER GOD!

YOU MADE IT THRU THE PLANTS?!! BUT, HOW--? UNGHHH!!
NO MATTER!! WHAT OF JANE FOSTER?? WHAT FATE HAVE YOU PLANNED FOR HER? SPEAK, MASTER OF INFAMY!

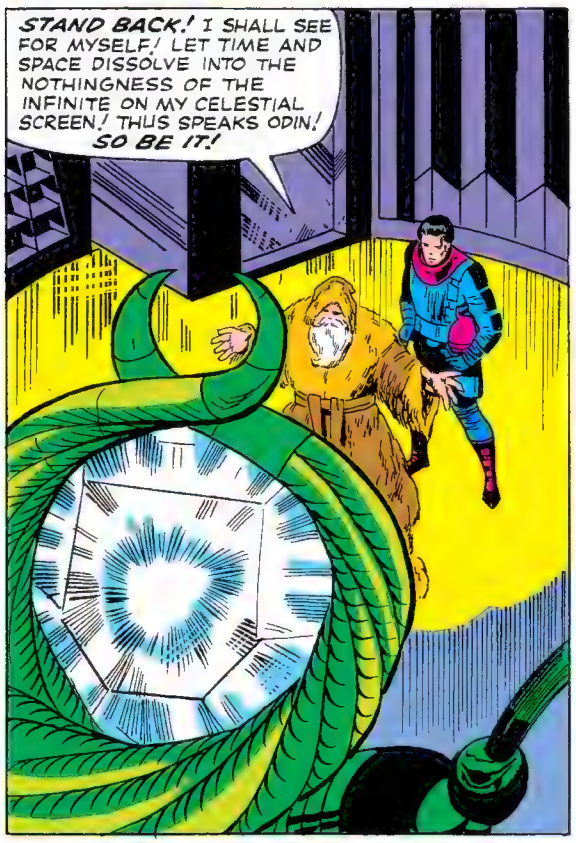

CALL OFF THE EXECUTIONER-- AND THE ENCHANTRESS!! YOU CAN DO IT-- YOU HAVE THE POWER!!
THEY WILL NOT HARM HER! THEIR ORDERS ARE JUST TO MENACE HER-- TO KEEP YOU FROM CONCENTRATING UPON THE BATTLE AT HAND!

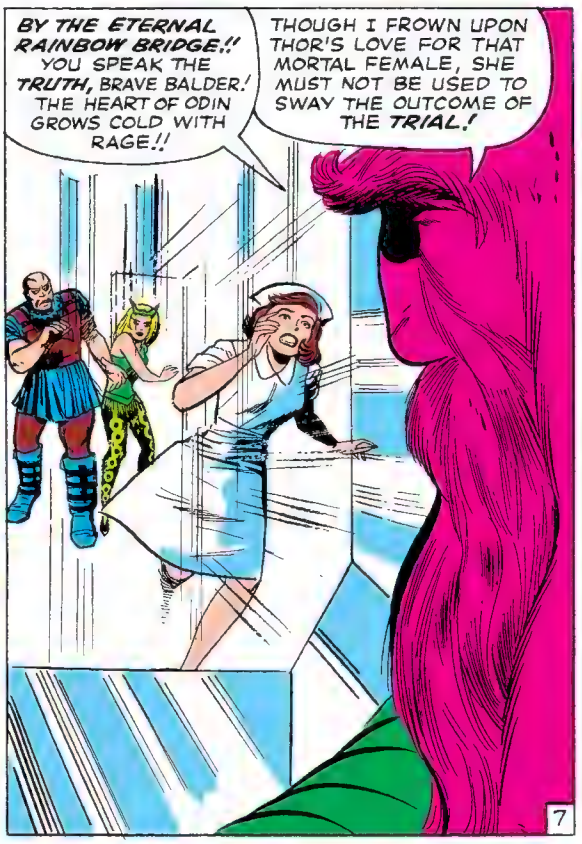

SUDDENLY, BEFORE ANOTHER WORD CAN BE UTTERED, AN UNEARTHLY BLAST OF SHEER ENERGY HURLS THE TWO FOES FROM EACH OTHER LIKE TENPINS!

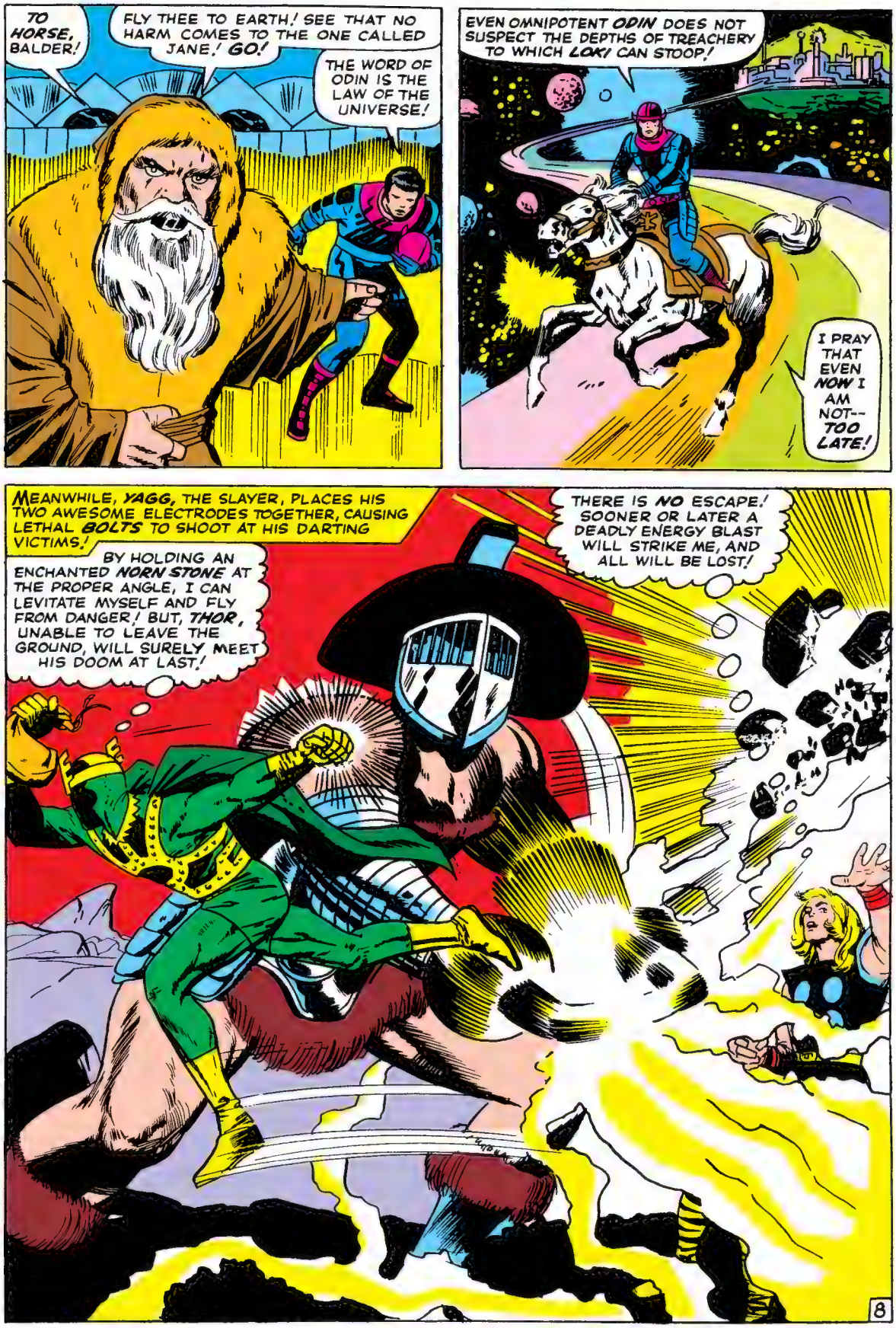

WHO DARES ENTER THE FORBIDDEN REALM OF SKORNHEIM?? ALL WHO ENTER MUST PERISH!!
PREPARE TO MEET YOUR FATE, ASGARDIANS!
FOR, I AM YAGG, INVINCIBLE SLAYER OF ALL WHO INTRUDE!

AT THAT MOMENT, IN FABLED ASGARD...
YOU TRESPASS ON OUR FRIENDSHIP, BALDER! NONE MAY DISTURB ODIN WHILE HE TAKES HIS IMPERIAL BATH!
A THOUSAND PARDONS, NOBLE ONE! BUT, MY BUSINESS IS URGENT! IT CANNOT WAIT! IT CONCERNS THOR AND LOKI!
SPEAK THEN, AND BE QUICK!

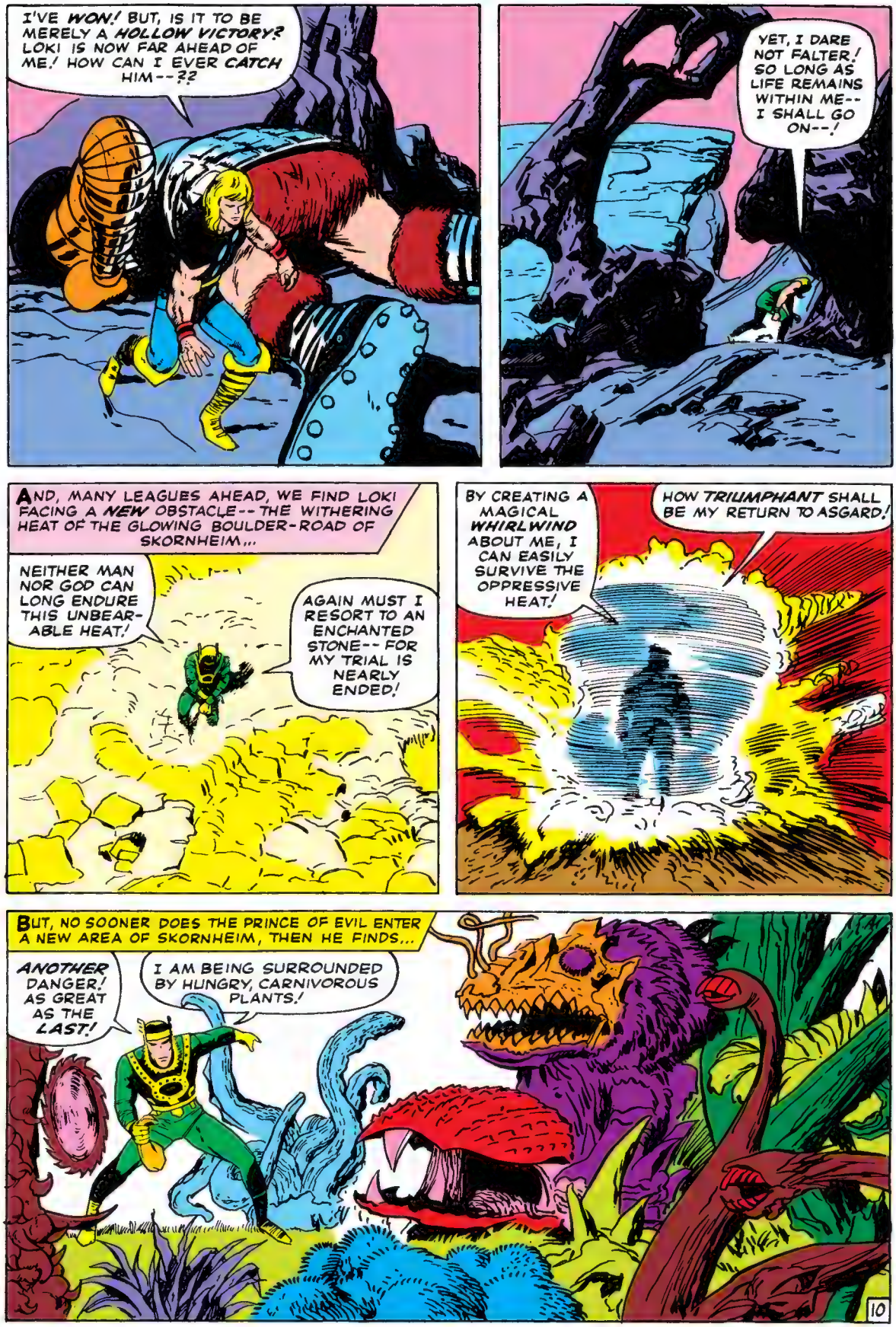
QUITE BY ACCIDENT, WHILE VIEWING THE PLANET EARTH, I HAVE LEARNED OF A DARK PLOT ON THE PART OF LOKI!
HE HAS PLACED THE MORTAL GIRL WHOM THOR LOVES IN GRAVE DANGER, SO THAT THE THUNDER GOD WILL BE DISTRACTED BY WORRY AND UNABLE TO FIGHT HIS BEST!
SAY NO MORE!


STAND BACK! I SHALL SEE FOR MYSELF! LET TIME AND SPACE DISSOLVE INTO THE NOTHINGNESS OF THE INFINITE ON MY CELESTIAL SCREEN! THUS SPEAKS ODIN! SO BE IT!


BY THE ETERNAL RAINBOW BRIDGE!! YOU SPEAK THE TRUTH, BRAVE BALDER! THE HEART OF ODIN GROWS COLD WITH RAGE!!
THOUGH I FROWN UPON THOR'S LOVE FOR THAT MORTAL FEMALE, SHE MUST NOT BE USED TO SWAY THE OUTCOME OF THE TRIAL!


TO HORSE, BALDER!
FLY THEE TO EARTH! SEE THAT NO HARM COMES TO THE ONE CALLED JANE! GO!
THE WORD OF ODIN IS THE LAW OF THE UNIVERSE!
EVEN OMNIPOTENT ODIN DOES NOT SUSPECT THE DEPTHS OF TREACHERY TO WHICH LOKI CAN STOOP!
I PRAY THAT EVEN NOW I AM NOT-- TOO LATE!
MEANWHILE, YAGG, THE SLAYER, PLACES HIS TWO AWESOME ELECTRODES TOGETHER, CAUSING LETHAL BOLTS TO SHOOT AT HIS DARTING VICTIMS!
BY HOLDING AN ENCHANTED NORN STONE AT THE PROPER ANGLE, I CAN LEVITATE MYSELF AND FLY FROM DANGER! BUT, THOR, UNABLE TO LEAVE THE GROUND, WILL SURELY MEET HIS DOOM AT LAST!
THERE IS NO ESCAPE! SOONER OR LATER A DEADLY ENERGY BLAST WILL STRIKE ME, AND ALL WILL BE LOST!

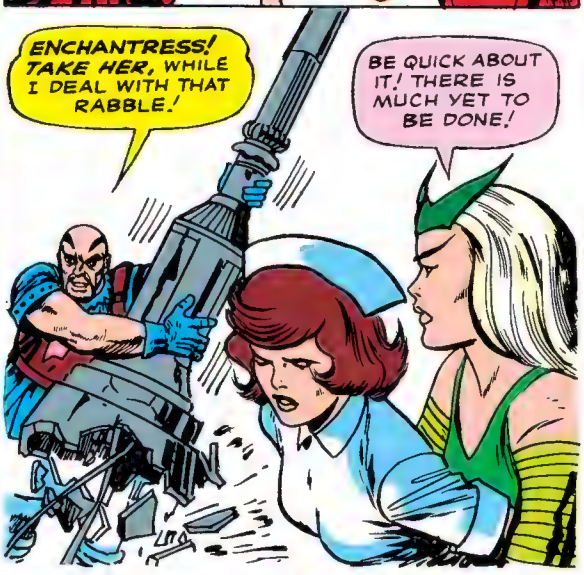
AS EMBATTLED THOR STANDS TRANSFIXED TO THE GROUND, LOKI, PROPELLED BY THE POWER OF HIS NORN STONE, EASILY FLIES OUT OF RANGE OF YAGG'S BLASTS!
HAH! I AM SAFE! BUT MY ACCURSED HALF-BROTHER IS STILL TRAPPED BEHIND ME!
FURIOUS AT HAVING LOST AN INTENDED VICTIM, YAGG SLOWLY TURNS TO THOR, DETERMINED THAT THIS ONE SHALL NOT ESCAPE!
NOW, HELPLESS ONE--YOU DIE!
ONLY THE THUNDER GOD'S STRENGTH, COURAGE, AND WILL TO LIVE ENABLE HIM TO DART AND WEAVE AND DUCK BLAST AFTER BLAST, UNTIL...
HIS ATTACKS ARE ENDLESS! I MUST FIGHT BACK!
THEN, REACHING OUT WITH FINGERS LIKE STEEL VISES, MIGHTY THOR RIPS OFF A FRAGMENT OF PETRIFIED ROCK--
--AND HURLS IT, STRAIGHT AND TRUE, WITH THE FORCE OF A COMET--FELLING THE GIANT YAGG EVEN AS DAVID FELLED GOLIATH MANY AGES BEFORE!
YAGG SHALL SLAY NO MORE!!
9

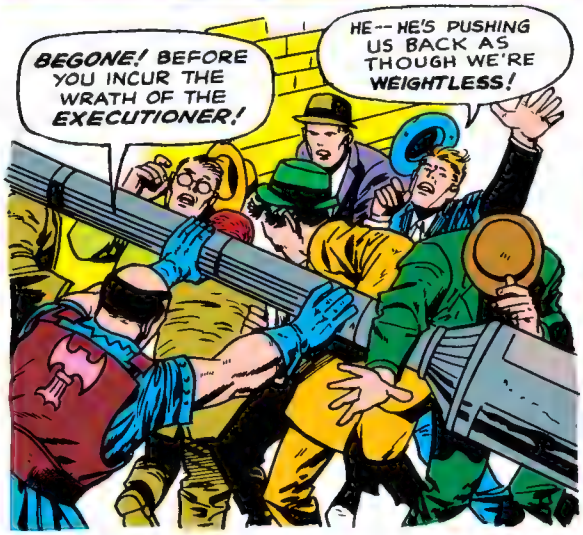

I'VE WON! BUT, IS IT TO BE MERELY A HOLLOW VICTORY? LOKI IS NOW FAR AHEAD OF ME! HOW CAN I EVER CATCH HIM--??
YET, I DARE NOT FALTER! SO LONG AS LIFE REMAINS WITHIN ME-- I SHALL GO ON--!
AND, MANY LEAGUES AHEAD, WE FIND LOKI FACING A NEW OBSTACLE--THE WITHERING HEAT OF THE GLOWING BOULDER-ROAD OF SKORNHEIM...
NEITHER MAN NOR GOD CAN LONG ENDURE THIS UNBEARABLE HEAT!
AGAIN MUST I RESORT TO AN ENCHANTED STONE-- FOR MY TRIAL IS NEARLY ENDED!
BY CREATING A MAGICAL WHIRLWIND ABOUT ME, I CAN EASILY SURVIVE THE OPPRESSIVE HEAT!
HOW TRIUMPHANT SHALL BE MY RETURN TO ASGARD!
BUT, NO SOONER DOES THE PRINCE OF EVIL ENTER A NEW AREA OF SKORNHEIM, THEN HE FINDS...
ANOTHER DANGER! AS GREAT AS THE LAST!
I AM BEING SURROUNDED BY HUNGRY, CARNIVOROUS PLANTS!

BUT, VICTORIOUS LOKI SHALL NOT APPEASE THEIR APPETITE -- NOT WHILE MY ENCHANTED NORN STONE CONTAINS A REPELLENT WHICH NO FORM OF PLANT LIFE CAN APPROACH!
AND NOW-- TO ASGARD!

WHILE, BACK ON EARTH, ANOTHER PROBLEM REMAINS UNRESOLVED...
NO NEED FOR HASTE! SHE CANNOT ESCAPE!
HELP ME, SOMEBODY!! HELP!
LOOK AT THE SIZE OF THAT GUY BEHIND THIS GAL!

I'LL TRY TO STOP HIM WHILE SOMEONE GOES FOR THE COPS!
HOLD IT, FELLA! LET GO OF THAT GIRL!


ENCHANTRESS! TAKE HER, WHILE I DEAL WITH THAT RABBLE!
BE QUICK ABOUT IT! THERE IS MUCH YET TO BE DONE!

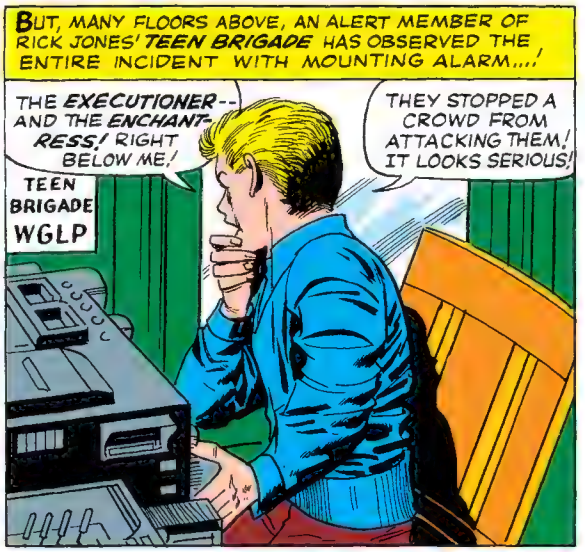

BEGONE! BEFORE YOU INCUR THE WRATH OF THE EXECUTIONER!
HE-- HE'S PUSHING US BACK AS THOUGH WE'RE WEIGHTLESS!

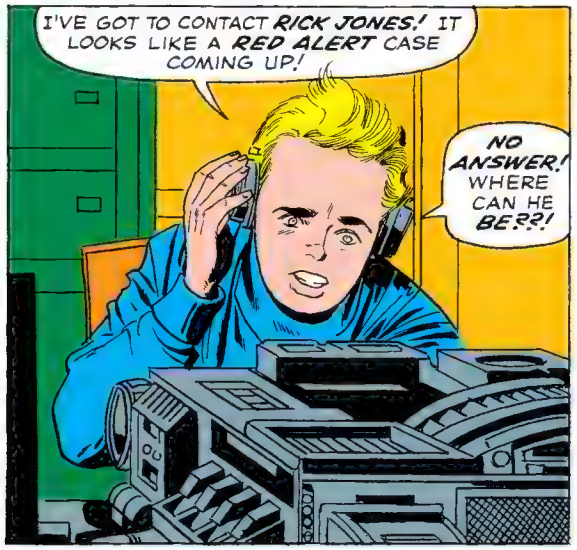
IF ONLY ODIN HAD NOT VOWED CERTAIN DEATH FOR AN IMMORTAL WHO KILLED A HUMAN! IF ONLY I DARED TO DEFY HIS EDICT!
EMPTY WORDS! NEITHER OF US DARE! LOOK-- THEY ARE REGROUPING AGAIN!

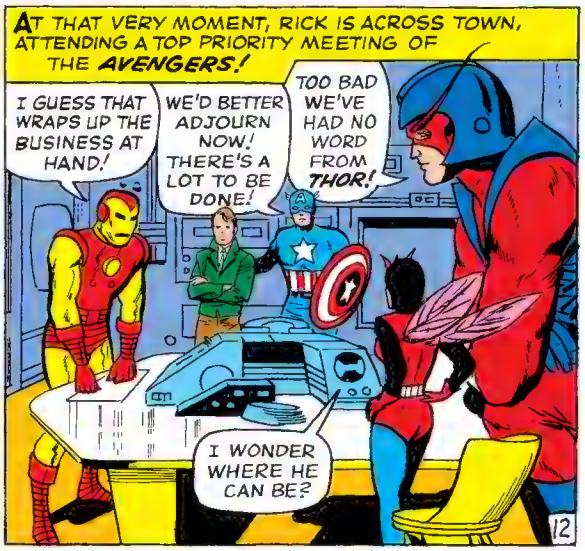
C'MON! IF THERE ARE ENOUGH OF US, MAYBE WE CAN STOP HIM!
HE CAN'T RUN ROUGHSHOD OVER US NO MATTER WHO HE IS--NO MATTER WHAT HE CALLS HIMSELF!
THE FIRST THING WE'VE GOT TO DO IS GET THAT GIRL AWAY FROM THEM!

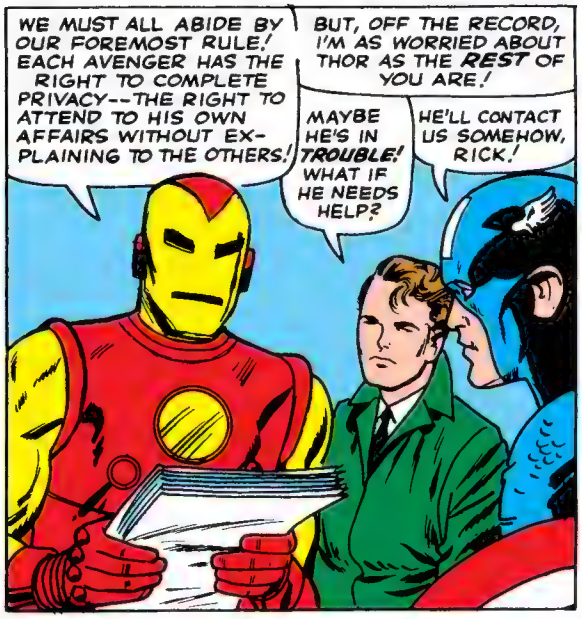
STAY BACK, EXECUTIONER!
I SHALL HANDLE THIS MY WAY!

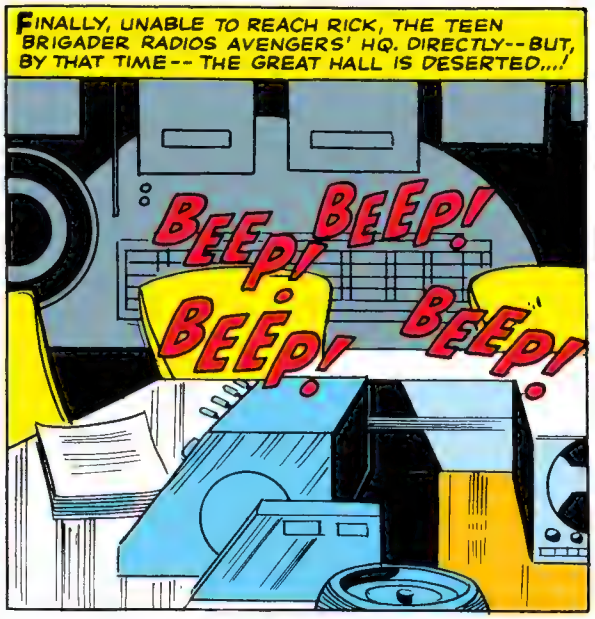
ONE SIMPLE SPELL IS ALL THAT I NEED! ONE SPELL TO MAKE THE RABBLE'S EYES HEAVY WITH SLEEP!

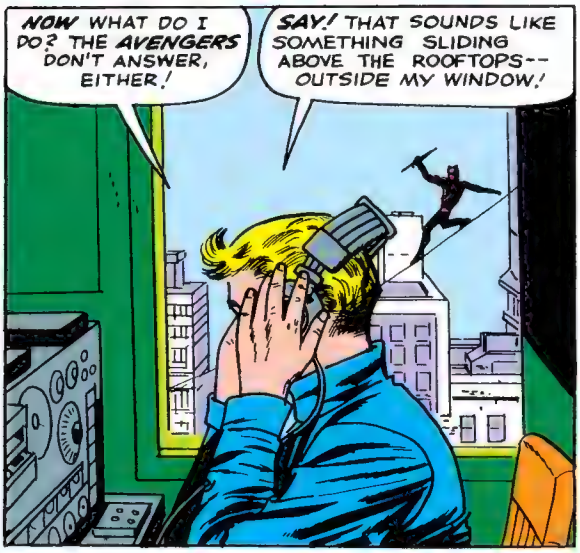

BUT, MANY FLOORS ABOVE, AN ALERT MEMBER OF RICK JONES' TEEN BRIGADE HAS OBSERVED THE ENTIRE INCIDENT WITH MOUNTING ALARM....!
THE EXECUTIONER--AND THE ENCHANTRESS! RIGHT BELOW ME!
THEY STOPPED A CROWD FROM ATTACKING THEM! IT LOOKS SERIOUS!
TEEN BRIGADE
WGLP

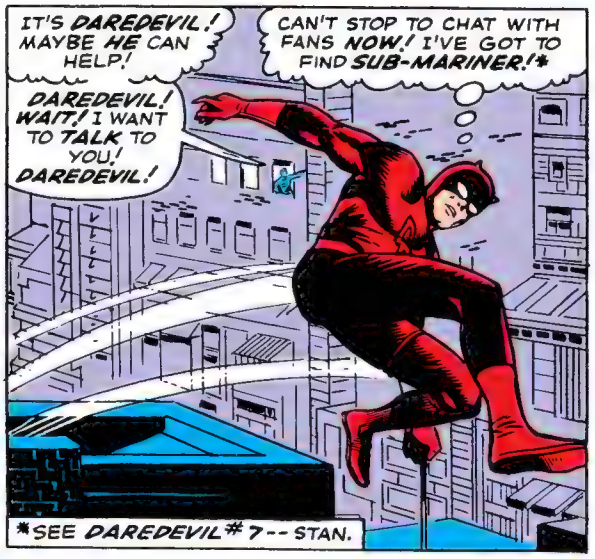

I'VE GOT TO CONTACT RICK JONES! IT LOOKS LIKE A RED ALERT CASE COMING UP!
NO ANSWER! WHERE CAN HE BE??!

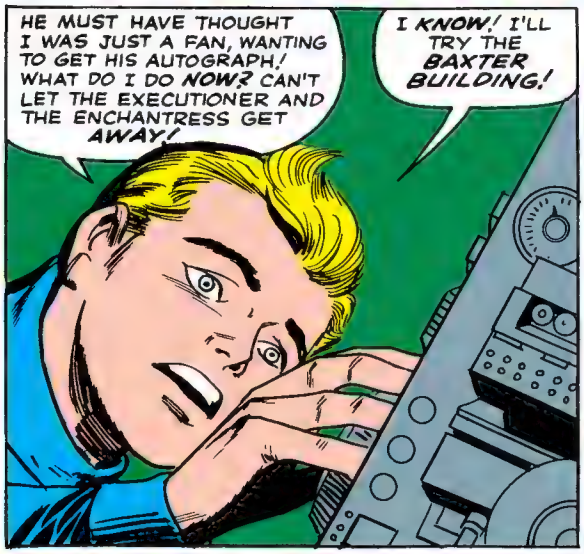

AT THAT VERY MOMENT, RICK IS ACROSS TOWN, ATTENDING A TOP PRIORITY MEETING OF THE AVENGERS!
I GUESS THAT WRAPS UP THE BUSINESS AT HAND!
WE'D BETTER ADJOURN NOW! THERE'S A LOT TO BE DONE!
TOO BAD WE'VE HAD NO WORD FROM THOR!
I WONDER WHERE HE CAN BE?

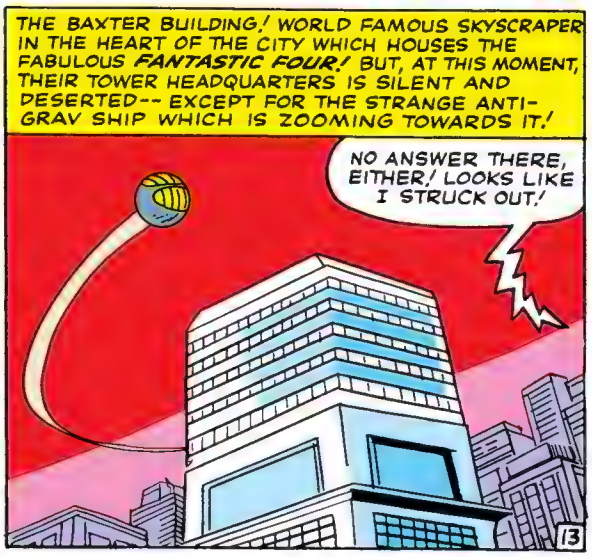

WE MUST ALL ABIDE BY OUR FOREMOST RULE! EACH AVENGER HAS THE RIGHT TO COMPLETE PRIVACY--THE RIGHT TO ATTEND TO HIS OWN AFFAIRS WITHOUT EXPLAINING TO THE OTHERS!
BUT, OFF THE RECORD, I'M AS WORRIED ABOUT THOR AS THE REST OF YOU ARE!
MAYBE HE'S IN TROUBLE! WHAT IF HE NEEDS HELP?
HE'LL CONTACT US SOMEHOW, RICK!


FINALLY, UNABLE TO REACH RICK, THE TEEN BRIGADER RADIOS AVENGERS' HQ. DIRECTLY--BUT, BY THAT TIME-- THE GREAT HALL IS DESERTED...!
BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!


NOW WHAT DO I DO? THE AVENGERS DON'T ANSWER, EITHER!
SAY! THAT SOUNDS LIKE SOMETHING SLIDING ABOVE THE ROOFTOPS-- OUTSIDE MY WINDOW!

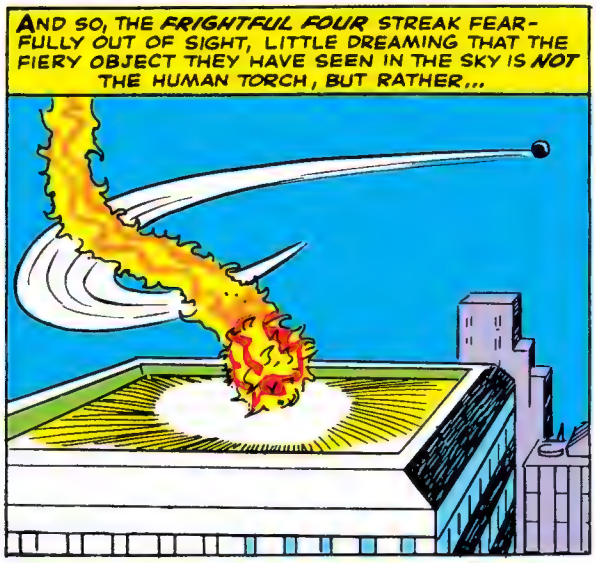

IT'S DAREDEVIL! MAYBE HE CAN HELP!
CAN'T STOP TO CHAT WITH FANS NOW! I'VE GOT TO FIND SUB-MARINER!*
DAREDEVIL! WAIT! I WANT TO TALK TO YOU, DAREDEVIL!
*SEE DAREDEVIL # 7 -- STAN.

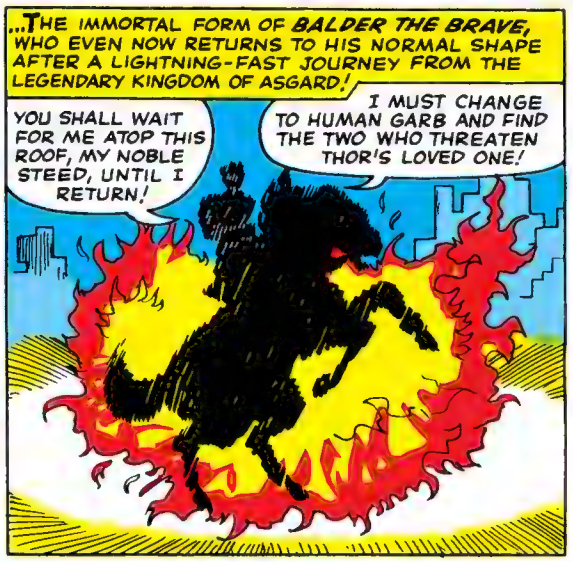

HE MUST HAVE THOUGHT I WAS JUST A FAN, WANTING TO GET HIS AUTOGRAPH! WHAT DO I DO NOW? CAN'T LET THE EXECUTIONER AND THE ENCHANTRESS GET AWAY!
I KNOW! I'LL TRY THE BAXTER BUILDING!


THE BAXTER BUILDING! WORLD FAMOUS SKYSCRAPER IN THE HEART OF THE CITY WHICH HOUSES THE FABULOUS FANTASTIC FOUR! BUT, AT THIS MOMENT, THEIR TOWER HEADQUARTERS IS SILENT AND DESERTED-- EXCEPT FOR THE STRANGE ANTI-GRAV SHIP WHICH IS ZOOMING TOWARDS IT!
NO ANSWER THERE, EITHER! LOOKS LIKE I STRUCK OUT!

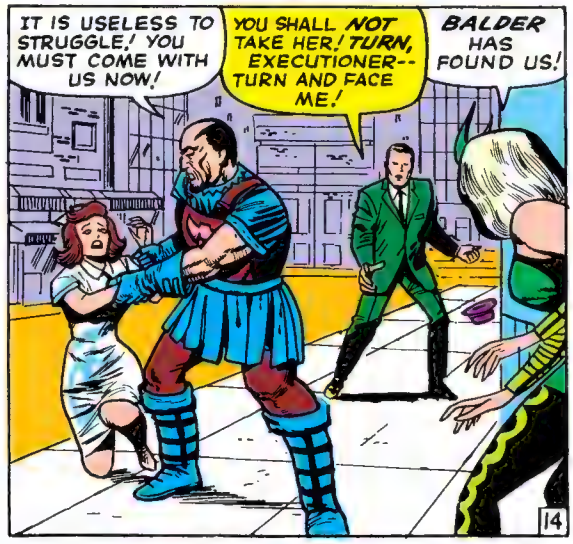
IT SEEMS THAT THE TOP FLOORS OF THE BAXTER BUILDING ARE DESERTED!
YEAH! THE F.F. COULDN'T HAVE LIVED THRU THAT EXPLOSION LAST MONTH! * LET'S TAKE THE PLACE OVER FOR OURSELVES!
IF WE KNEW THEY WERE DEAD, WE WOULDN'T HAVE HAD TO STAY IN HIDING SO BLAMED LONG!
* SEE F.F. #38 -- STAN.

HOLD IT! LOOK AT THAT FLAMING STREAK NEAR US IN THE SKY!
IT MUST BE THE TORCH! THEY'RE STILL ALIVE! LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!

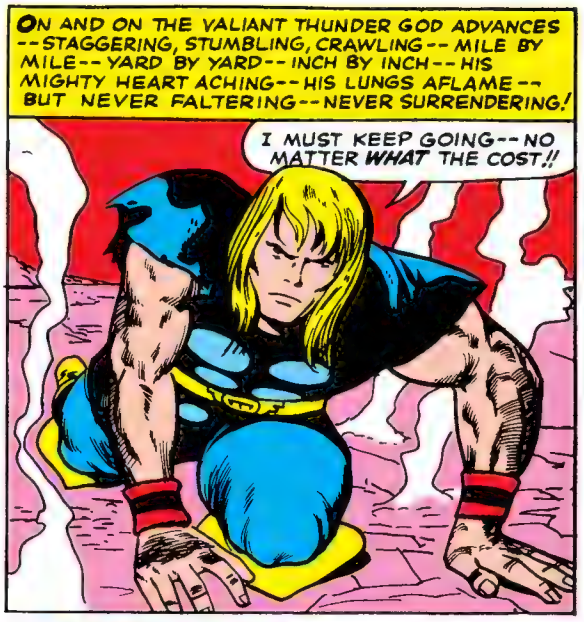

AND SO, THE FRIGHTFUL FOUR STREAK FEARFULLY OUT OF SIGHT, LITTLE DREAMING THAT THE FIERY OBJECT THEY HAVE SEEN IN THE SKY IS NOT THE HUMAN TORCH, BUT RATHER...

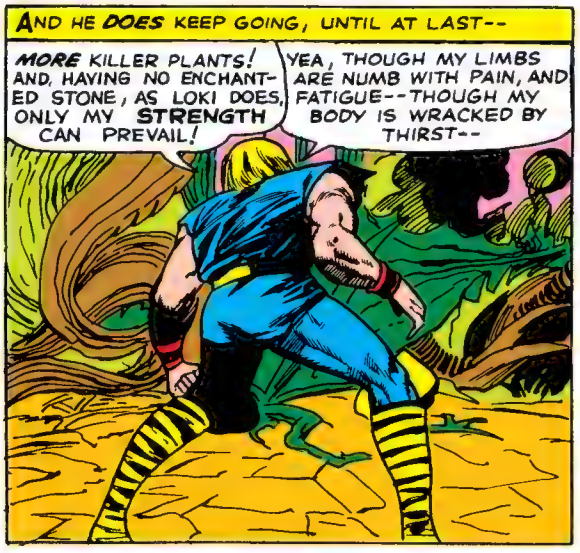

...THE IMMORTAL FORM OF BALDER THE BRAVE, WHO EVEN NOW RETURNS TO HIS NORMAL SHAPE AFTER A LIGHTNING-FAST JOURNEY FROM THE LEGENDARY KINGDOM OF ASGARD!
YOU SHALL WAIT FOR ME ATOP THIS ROOF, MY NOBLE STEED, UNTIL I RETURN!
I MUST CHANGE TO HUMAN GARB AND FIND THE TWO WHO THREATEN THOR'S LOVED ONE!

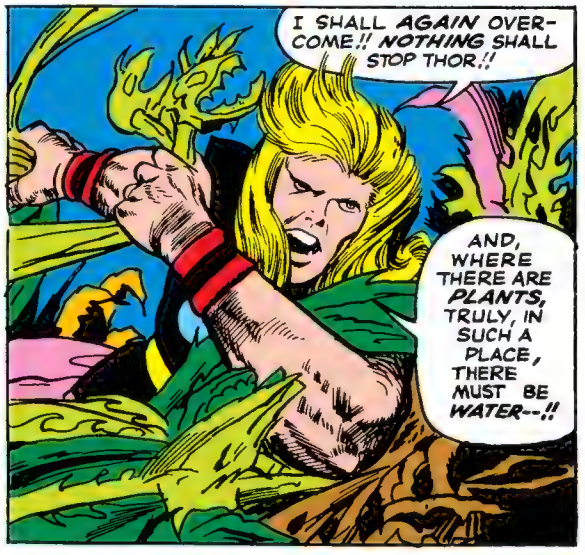
THUS, SECONDS LATER, A MAN EMERGES FROM THE LOBBY OF THE BAXTER BUILDING... A MAN WHO SEEMS LIKE ANY OTHER, EXCEPT FOR THE BURNING INTENSITY OF HIS PIERCING EYES--!
I SEE THEM-- JUST ACROSS THE STREET!
SO CONFIDENT ARE THEY OF THEIR UNEARTHLY POWER, THAT THEY DO NOT EVEN BOTHER TO PROCEED WITH HASTE!
BAXTER BUILDING

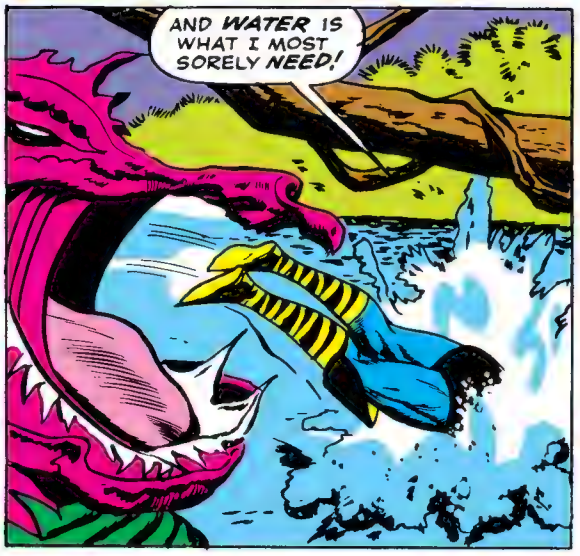

IT IS USELESS TO STRUGGLE! YOU MUST COME WITH US NOW!
YOU SHALL NOT TAKE HER! TURN, EXECUTIONER-- TURN AND FACE ME!
BALDER HAS FOUND US!

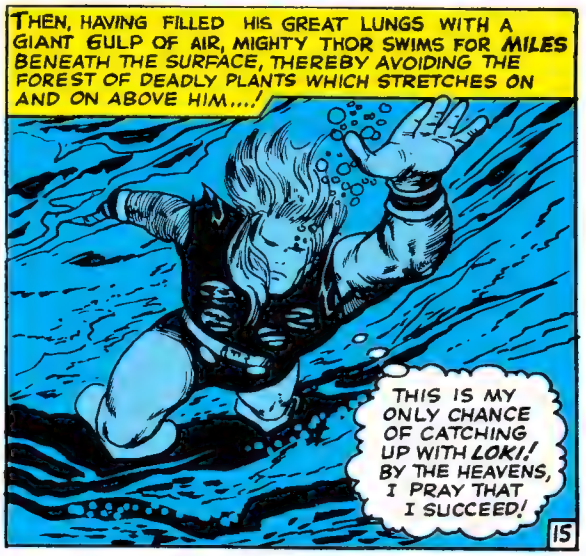
BUT NOW, ONCE AGAIN WE RETURN TO MIGHTY THOR, AS HE WEARILY FOLLOWS THE TRAIL OF HIS IMMORTAL ARCH-ENEMY...
I DO NOT KNOW HOW LOKI MADE HIS WAY THRU THIS DEADLY PLAIN OF UNENDING HEAT....!
BUT, BY THE GOLDEN GATES OF ASGARD, WHAT LOKI CAN DO, THOR CAN DO!!

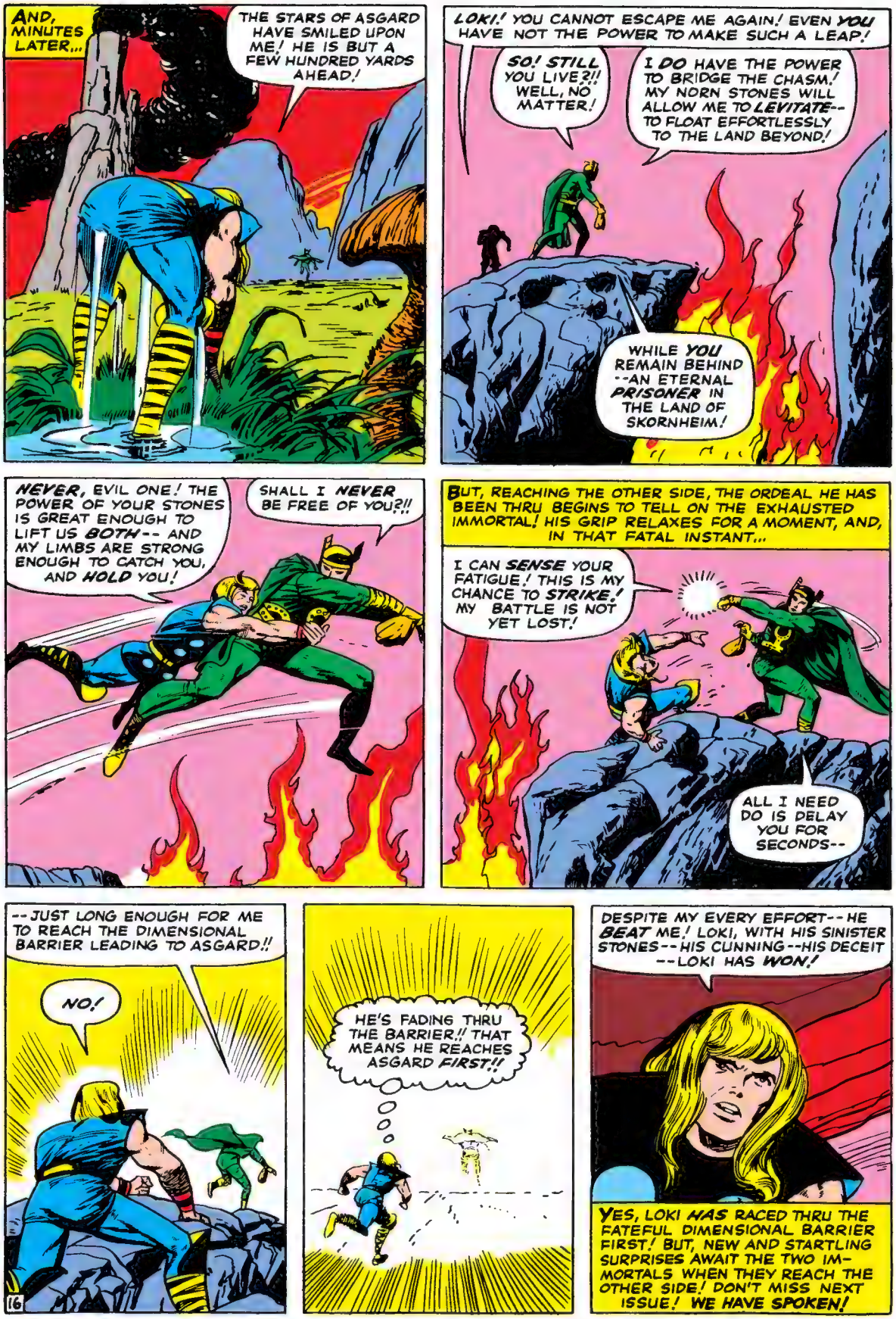

ON AND ON THE VALIANT THUNDER GOD ADVANCES --STAGGERING, STUMBLING, CRAWLING-- MILE BY MILE--YARD BY YARD--INCH BY INCH--HIS MIGHTY HEART ACHING--HIS LUNGS AFLAME-- BUT NEVER FALTERING--NEVER SURRENDERING!
I MUST KEEP GOING--NO MATTER WHAT THE COST!!

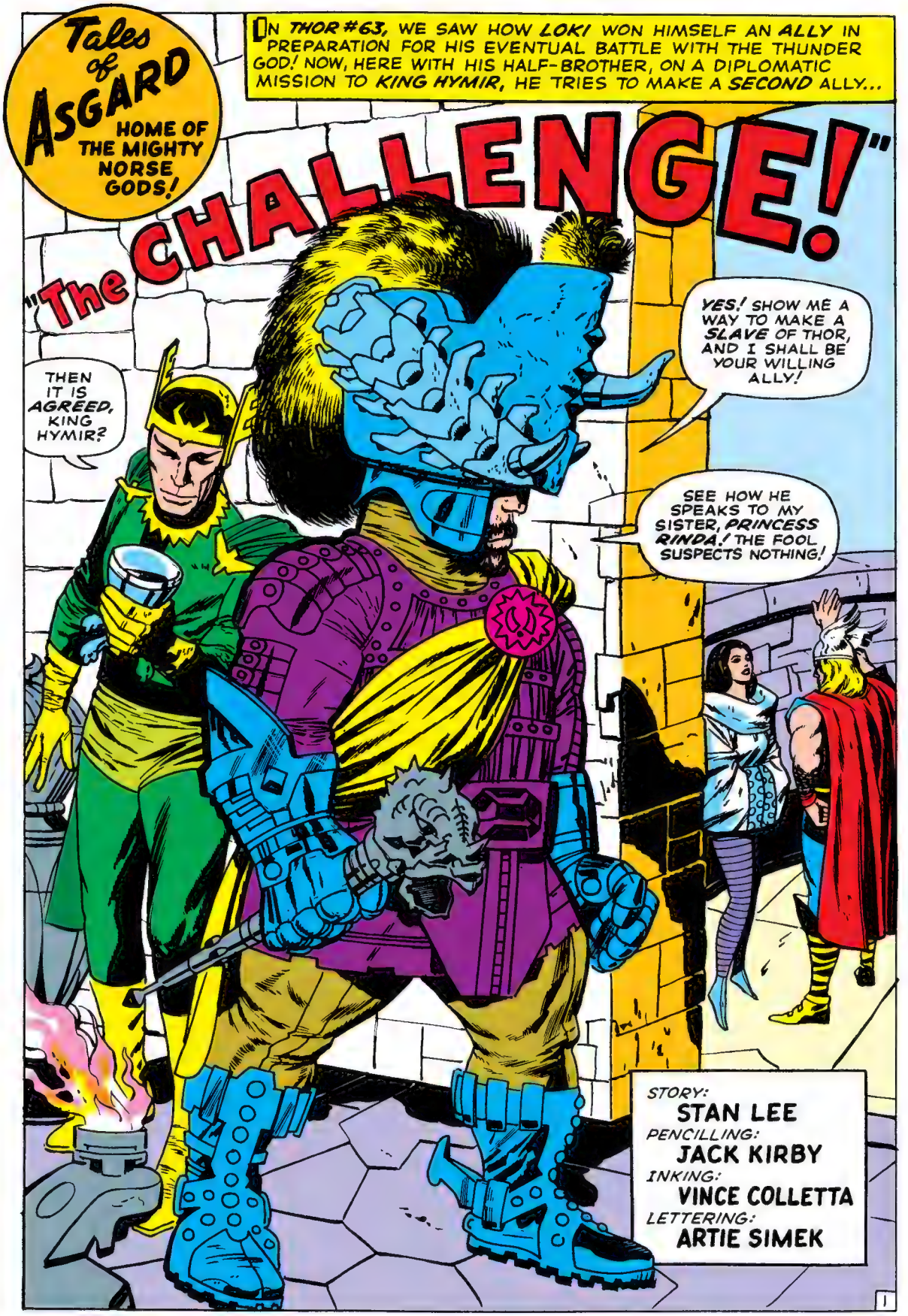

AND HE DOES KEEP GOING, UNTIL AT LAST--
MORE KILLER PLANTS! AND, HAVING NO ENCHANTED STONE, AS LOKI DOES, ONLY MY STRENGTH CAN PREVAIL!
YEA, THOUGH MY LIMBS ARE NUMB WITH PAIN, AND FATIGUE--THOUGH MY BODY IS WRACKED BY THIRST--


I SHALL AGAIN OVERCOME!! NOTHING SHALL STOP THOR!!
AND, WHERE THERE ARE PLANTS, TRULY, IN SUCH A PLACE, THERE MUST BE WATER--!!

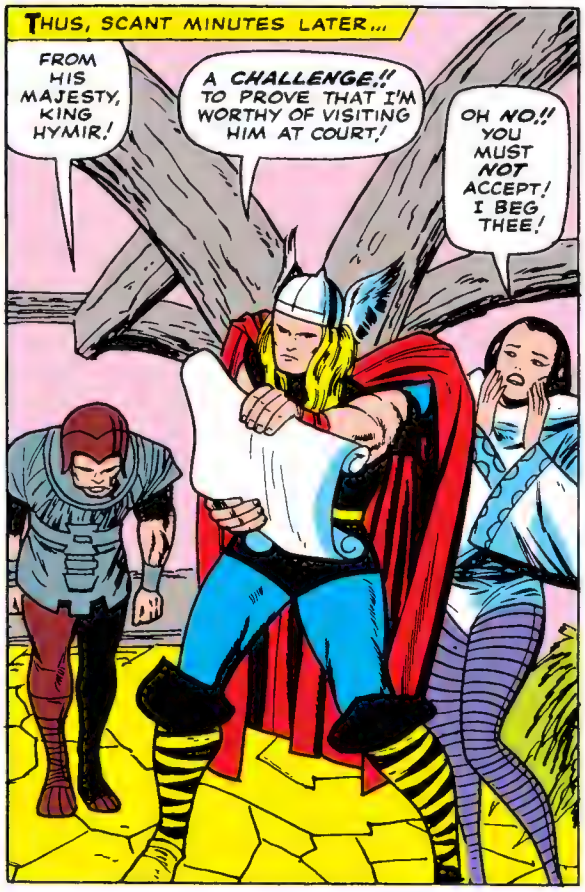

AND WATER IS WHAT I MOST SORELY NEED!

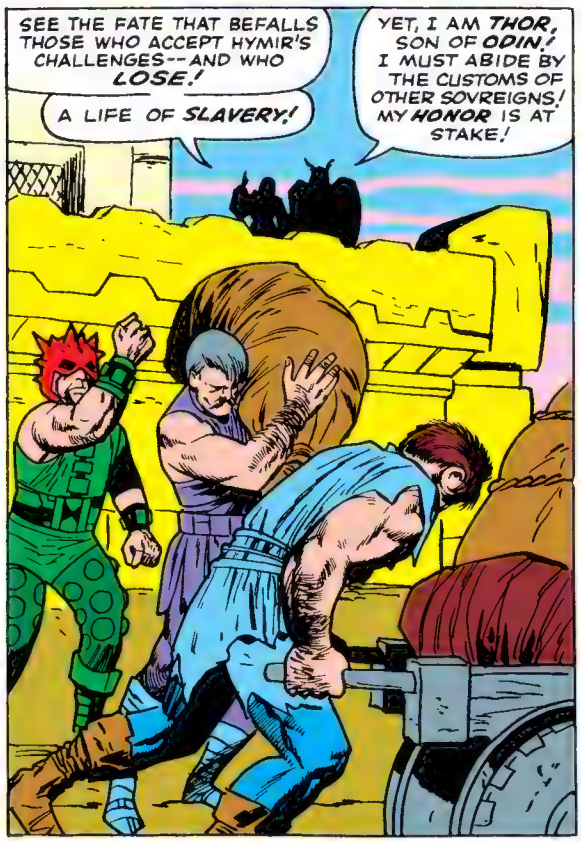

THEN, HAVING FILLED HIS GREAT LUNGS WITH A GIANT GULP OF AIR, MIGHTY THOR SWIMS FOR MILES BENEATH THE SURFACE, THEREBY AVOIDING THE FOREST OF DEADLY PLANTS WHICH STRETCHES ON AND ON ABOVE HIM....!
THIS IS MY ONLY CHANCE OF CATCHING UP WITH LOKI! BY THE HEAVENS, I PRAY THAT I SUCCEED!

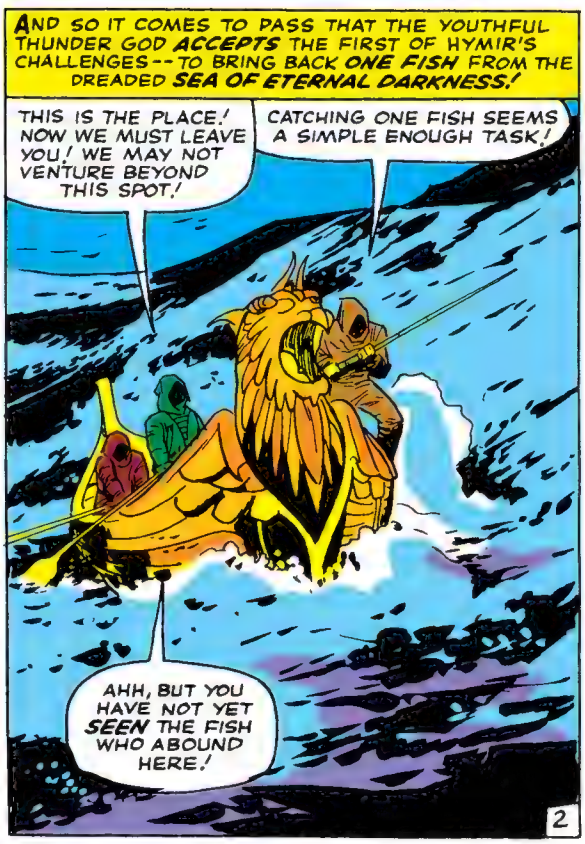

AND, MINUTES LATER...
THE STARS OF ASGARD HAVE SMILED UPON ME! HE IS BUT A FEW HUNDRED YARDS AHEAD!
LOKI! YOU CANNOT ESCAPE ME AGAIN! EVEN YOU HAVE NOT THE POWER TO MAKE SUCH A LEAP!
SO! STILL YOU LIVE?!! WELL, NO MATTER!
I DO HAVE THE POWER TO BRIDGE THE CHASM! MY NORN STONES WILL ALLOW ME TO LEVITATE--TO FLOAT EFFORTLESSLY TO THE LAND BEYOND!
WHILE YOU REMAIN BEHIND --AN ETERNAL PRISONER IN THE LAND OF SKORNHEIM!
NEVER, EVIL ONE! THE POWER OF YOUR STONES IS GREAT ENOUGH TO LIFT US BOTH-- AND MY LIMBS ARE STRONG ENOUGH TO CATCH YOU, AND HOLD YOU!
SHALL I NEVER BE FREE OF YOU?!!
BUT, REACHING THE OTHER SIDE, THE ORDEAL HE HAS BEEN THRU BEGINS TO TELL ON THE EXHAUSTED IMMORTAL! HIS GRIP RELAXES FOR A MOMENT, AND, IN THAT FATAL INSTANT...
I CAN SENSE YOUR FATIGUE! THIS IS MY CHANCE TO STRIKE! MY BATTLE IS NOT YET LOST!
ALL I NEED DO IS DELAY YOU FOR SECONDS--
--JUST LONG ENOUGH FOR ME TO REACH THE DIMENSIONAL BARRIER LEADING TO ASGARD!!
NO!
HE'S FADING THRU THE BARRIER!! THAT MEANS HE REACHES ASGARD FIRST!!
DESPITE MY EVERY EFFORT--HE BEAT ME! LOKI, WITH HIS SINISTER STONES--HIS CUNNING--HIS DECEIT --LOKI HAS WON!
YES, LOKI HAS RACED THRU THE FATEFUL DIMENSIONAL BARRIER FIRST! BUT, NEW AND STARTLING SURPRISES AWAIT THE TWO IMMORTALS WHEN THEY REACH THE OTHER SIDE! DON'T MISS NEXT ISSUE! WE HAVE SPOKEN!
16


Tales of Asgard
HOME OF THE MIGHTY NORSE GODS!
IN THOR #63, WE SAW HOW LOKI WON HIMSELF AN ALLY IN PREPARATION FOR HIS EVENTUAL BATTLE WITH THE THUNDER GOD! NOW, HERE WITH HIS HALF-BROTHER, ON A DIPLOMATIC MISSION TO KING HYMIR, HE TRIES TO MAKE A SECOND ALLY...
"The CHALLENGE!"
THEN IT IS AGREED, KING HYMIR?
YES! SHOW ME A WAY TO MAKE A SLAVE OF THOR, AND I SHALL BE YOUR WILLING ALLY!
SEE HOW HE SPEAKS TO MY SISTER, PRINCESS RINDA! THE FOOL SUSPECTS NOTHING!
STORY: STAN LEE
PENCILLING: JACK KIRBY
INKING: VINCE COLLETTA
LETTERING: ARTIE SIMEK
1

WE ARE HERE ON A DIPLOMATIC MISSION, TO GAIN YOUR FRIENDSHIP FOR ASGARD!
THEREFORE, THOR IS HONOR-BOUND TO ACCEPT ANY CHALLENGE YOU GIVE HIM! AND YOU ARE FAMOUS FOR YOUR EVIL CHALLENGES!
OF COURSE! IF HE REFUSES, HE LOSES HONOR! AND, IF HE FAILS ---HE LOSES ALL!! IT SHALL BE DONE!


THUS, SCANT MINUTES LATER...
FROM HIS MAJESTY, KING HYMIR!
A CHALLENGE!! TO PROVE THAT I'M WORTHY OF VISITING HIM AT COURT!
OH NO!! YOU MUST NOT ACCEPT! I BEG THEE!

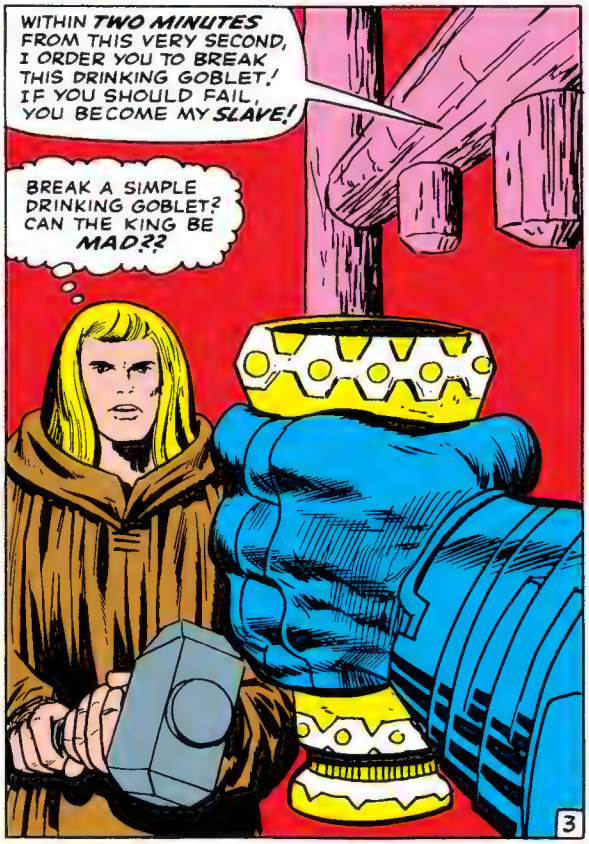

SEE THE FATE THAT BEFALLS THOSE WHO ACCEPT HYMIR'S CHALLENGES--AND WHO LOSE!
A LIFE OF SLAVERY!
YET, I AM THOR, SON OF ODIN! I MUST ABIDE BY THE CUSTOMS OF OTHER SOVREIGNS! MY HONOR IS AT STAKE!


AND SO IT COMES TO PASS THAT THE YOUTHFUL THUNDER GOD ACCEPTS THE FIRST OF HYMIR'S CHALLENGES--TO BRING BACK ONE FISH FROM THE DREADED SEA OF ETERNAL DARKNESS!
THIS IS THE PLACE! NOW WE MUST LEAVE YOU! WE MAY NOT VENTURE BEYOND THIS SPOT!
CATCHING ONE FISH SEEMS A SIMPLE ENOUGH TASK!
AHH, BUT YOU HAVE NOT YET SEEN THE FISH WHO ABOUND HERE!

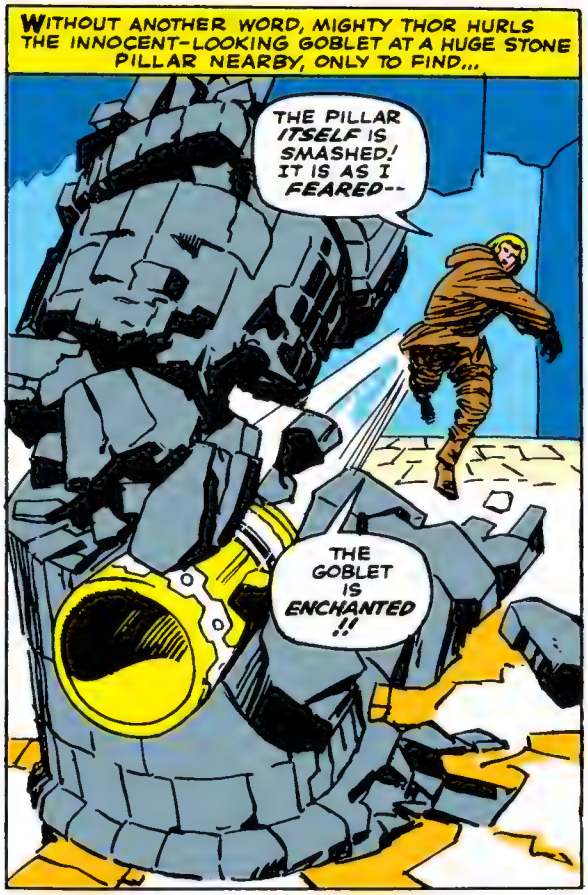
MOMENTS LATER, THOR REALIZES WHAT WAS MEANT BY THAT CRYPTIC REMARK...
THESE ARE NOT MERE FISH-- BUT UNDERSEA MONSTERS! NO FISHING LINE COULD CAPTURE SUCH A CREATURE!

BUT THE MIGHTY HAMMER OF THOR CAN!

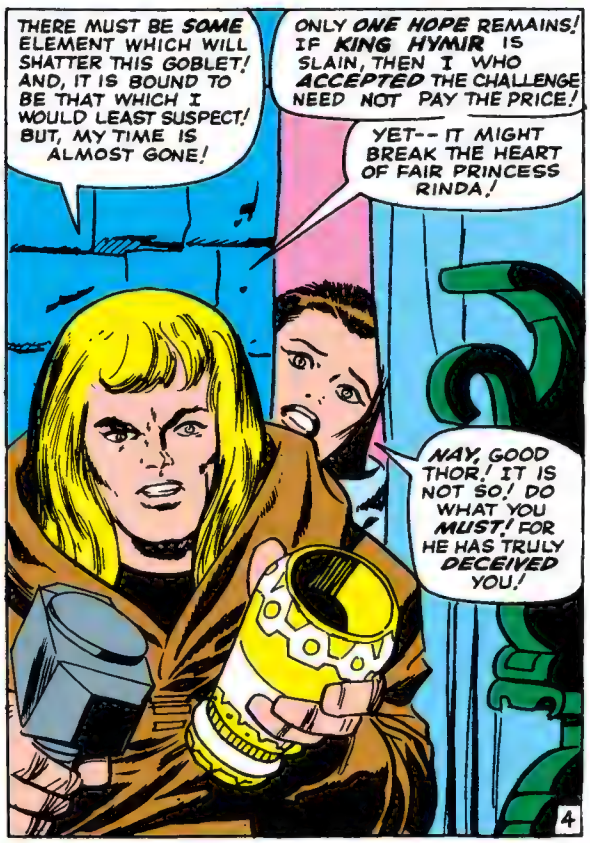
AND SO...
THE DEED IS DONE, KING HYMIR!
DO NOT GLOAT YET! YOUR FIRST CHALLENGE WAS A SIMPLE ONE--TO TEST YOUR METTLE! BUT NOW--!
YOU ARE BOUND TO ACCEPT THE MAIN CHALLENGE! A TASK WHICH WILL RESIST EVEN YOUR MATCHLESS POWER!

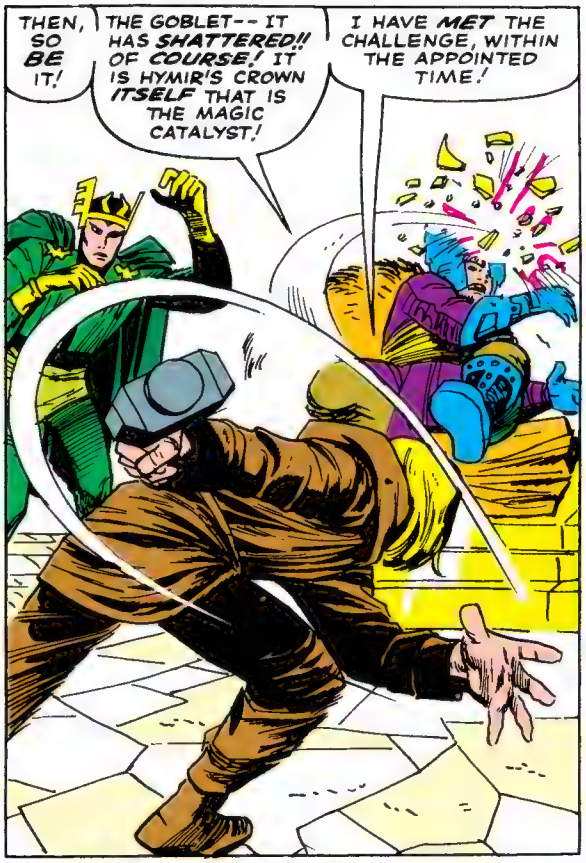

WITHIN TWO MINUTES FROM THIS VERY SECOND, I ORDER YOU TO BREAK THIS DRINKING GOBLET! IF YOU SHOULD FAIL, YOU BECOME MY SLAVE!
BREAK A SIMPLE DRINKING GOBLET? CAN THE KING BE MAD??
3

NO NEED TO RUSH, BROTHER! IT IS SURELY A SIMPLE TASK!
LOKI TRIES TO DELAY ME! THERE IS MORE TO THIS THAN MEETS THE EYE!
I MUST ACT NOW!


WITHOUT ANOTHER WORD, MIGHTY THOR HURLS THE INNOCENT-LOOKING GOBLET AT A HUGE STONE PILLAR NEARBY, ONLY TO FIND...
THE PILLAR ITSELF IS SMASHED! IT IS AS I FEARED--
THE GOBLET IS ENCHANTED !!

EVEN MY HAMMER, WHICH CAN TOPPLE A MOUNTAIN, HAS NO EFFECT UPON IT!!
YET, FOR EVERY SPELL THERE IS A COUNTER-SPELL!!
BUT, HOW CAN I FIND IT, IN THE SECONDS WHICH REMAIN??
KLANG!


THERE MUST BE SOME ELEMENT WHICH WILL SHATTER THIS GOBLET! AND, IT IS BOUND TO BE THAT WHICH I WOULD LEAST SUSPECT! BUT, MY TIME IS ALMOST GONE!
ONLY ONE HOPE REMAINS! IF KING HYMIR IS SLAIN, THEN I WHO ACCEPTED THE CHALLENGE NEED NOT PAY THE PRICE!
YET-- IT MIGHT BREAK THE HEART OF FAIR PRINCESS RINDA!
NAY, GOOD THOR! IT IS NOT SO! DO WHAT YOU MUST! FOR HE HAS TRULY DECEIVED YOU!


THEN, SO BE IT!
THE GOBLET-- IT HAS SHATTERED!! OF COURSE! IT IS HYMIR'S CROWN ITSELF THAT IS THE MAGIC CATALYST!
I HAVE MET THE CHALLENGE, WITHIN THE APPOINTED TIME!

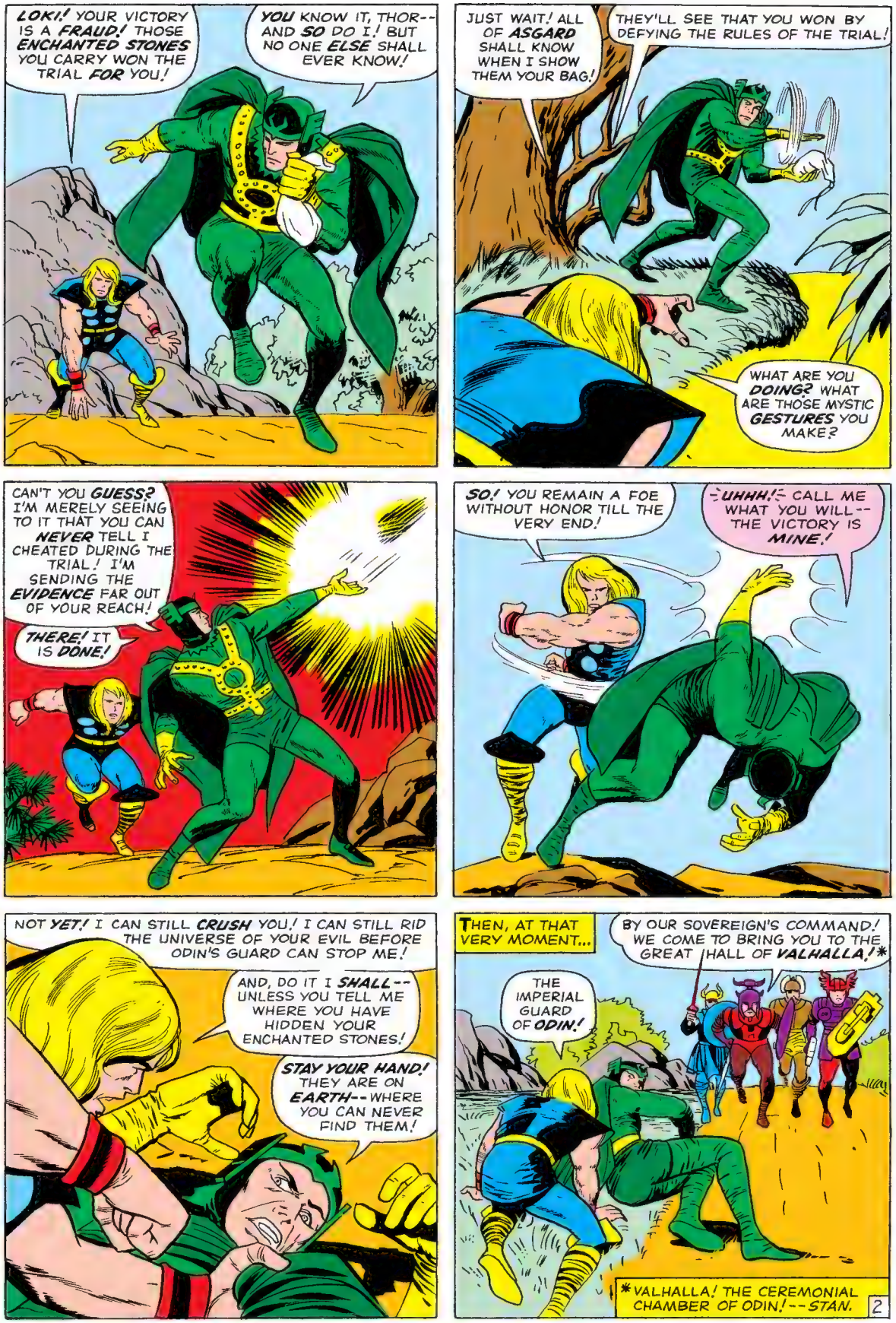
HOW COULD YOU HAVE KNOWN? WHO TOLD YOU THE SECRET--?
WE SHALL SPEAK OF THIS ANOTHER TIME! IT IS ENOUGH FOR NOW THAT THE HONOR OF ASGARD HAS BEEN UPHELD!
IF MY CROWN WERE NOT ENCHANTED, THE FORCE WITH WHICH HE HURLED THAT GOBLET WOULD SURELY HAVE SLAIN ME ON THE SPOT!

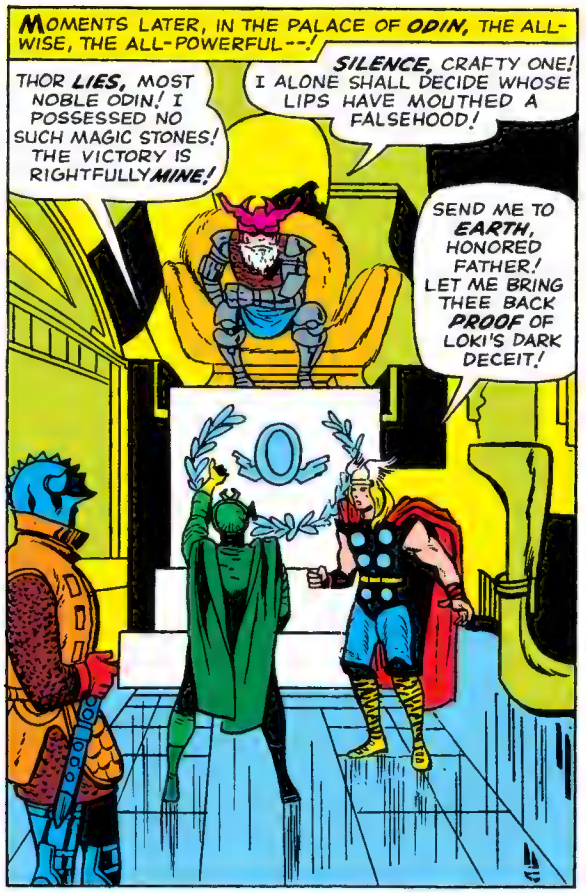
THERE IS NO WAY HE COULD HAVE FATHOMED MY SECRET, UNLESS--
YOU BETRAYED ME! YOU MUST HAVE TOLD HIM OF MY CROWN! IF YOU WOULD BETRAY YOUR BROTHER, THEN YOU WOULD TURN AGAINST ANY MAN!
NO! NO!
BEGONE FROM MY COURT! IF I DID NOT SO FEAR THE MIGHT OF THOR, I WOULD SLAY YOU WHERE YOU STAND!
5

FORTUNE CANNOT ALWAYS FAVOR THE ACCURSED THUNDER GOD! ETERNITY IS ENDLESS! I SHALL NEVER STOP SCHEMING!
THE END
MANY ARE THE SINISTER SCHEMES OF LOKI-- AND MANY ARE THE SPECTACULAR TALES WHICH AWAIT YOU ON THESE PAGES IN THE MONTHS TO COME! SO, TILL WE ARE ONCE AGAIN SUMMONED TO THE IMPERIAL REALM, MAY THE EYES OF ASGARD BE EVER UPON THEE!

JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY
WITH
THE MIGHTY
THOR
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
IND.
MARVEL COMICS GROUP 12¢
117 JUNE
THE MOST POWERFUL AVENGER OF ALL TIME THUNDERS...
"INTO THE BLAZE OF BATTLE!"
MIGHTIER THAN EVER BEFORE!

THE MIGHTY THOR
"INTO THE BLAZE OF BATTLE!"
BY SHEER TRICKERY, THE EVIL LOKI HAS MANAGED TO RETURN TO ASGARD, SECONDS AHEAD OF THOR, THUS WINNING THE AWESOME "TRIAL OF THE GODS"...*
BEHOLD! MIGHTY THOR HAS BEEN BESTED! LOKI WAS THE FIRST TO APPEAR THRU THE DIMENSION BARRIER!
LOKI IS THE VICTOR!
REGALLY WRITTEN BY: STAN LEE
DAZZLINGLY DRAWN BY: JACK KIRBY
INVINCIBLY INKED BY: VINCE COLLETTA
LONESOMELY LETTERED BY: ARTIE SIMEK
*AS WE SHOWED YOU IN THOR #116 -- STAN.
1

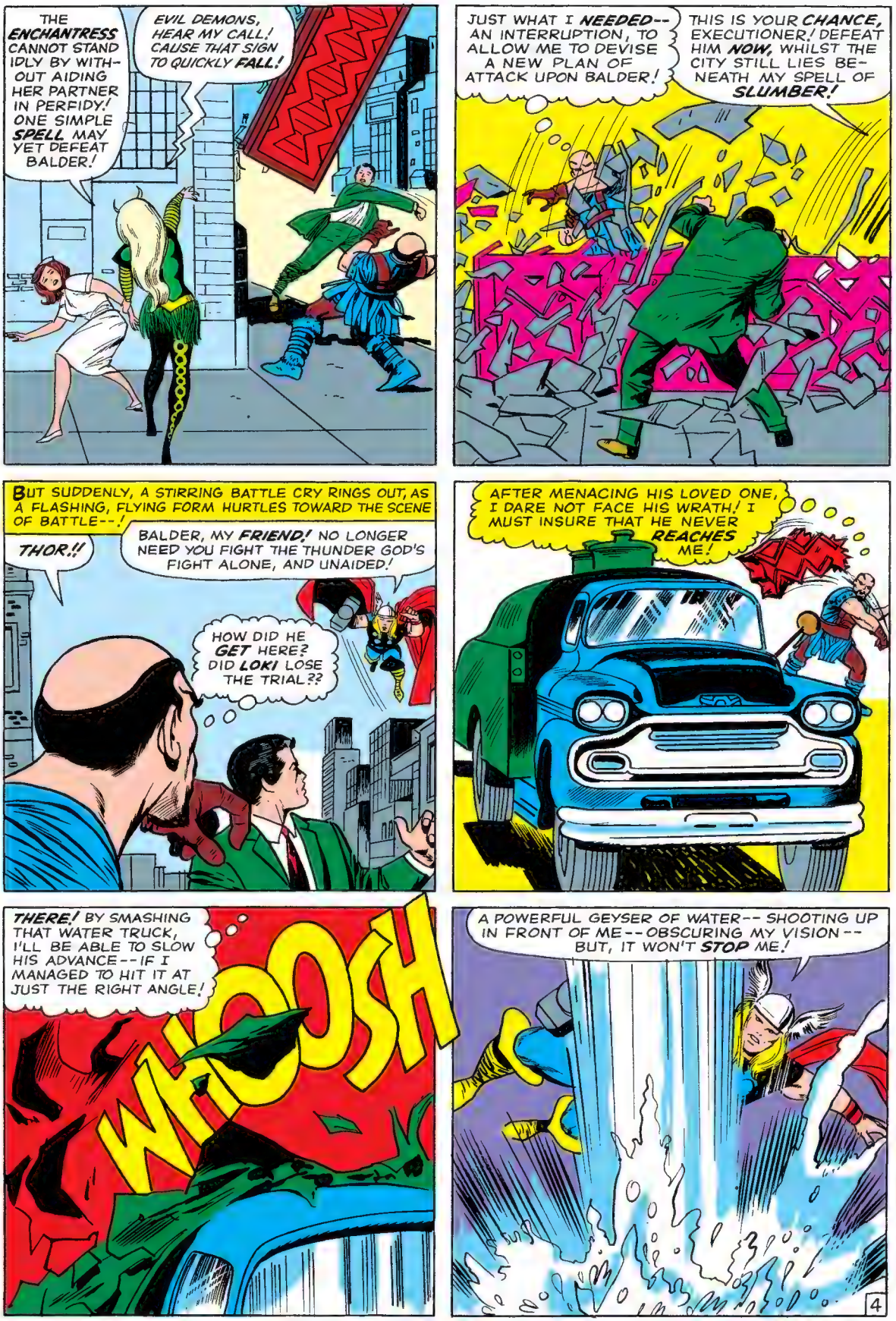

LOKI! YOUR VICTORY IS A FRAUD! THOSE ENCHANTED STONES YOU CARRY WON THE TRIAL FOR YOU!
YOU KNOW IT, THOR--AND SO DO I! BUT NO ONE ELSE SHALL EVER KNOW!
JUST WAIT! ALL OF ASGARD SHALL KNOW WHEN I SHOW THEM YOUR BAG!
THEY'LL SEE THAT YOU WON BY DEFYING THE RULES OF THE TRIAL!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING? WHAT ARE THOSE MYSTIC GESTURES YOU MAKE?
CAN'T YOU GUESS? I'M MERELY SEEING TO IT THAT YOU CAN NEVER TELL I CHEATED DURING THE TRIAL! I'M SENDING THE EVIDENCE FAR OUT OF YOUR REACH!
THERE! IT IS DONE!
SO! YOU REMAIN A FOE WITHOUT HONOR TILL THE VERY END!
-UHHH!- CALL ME WHAT YOU WILL--THE VICTORY IS MINE!
NOT YET! I CAN STILL CRUSH YOU! I CAN STILL RID THE UNIVERSE OF YOUR EVIL BEFORE ODIN'S GUARD CAN STOP ME!
AND, DO IT I SHALL--UNLESS YOU TELL ME WHERE YOU HAVE HIDDEN YOUR ENCHANTED STONES!
STAY YOUR HAND! THEY ARE ON EARTH--WHERE YOU CAN NEVER FIND THEM!
THEN, AT THAT VERY MOMENT...
BY OUR SOVEREIGN'S COMMAND! WE COME TO BRING YOU TO THE GREAT HALL OF VALHALLA!*
THE IMPERIAL GUARD OF ODIN!
*VALHALLA! THE CEREMONIAL CHAMBER OF ODIN!--STAN.
2

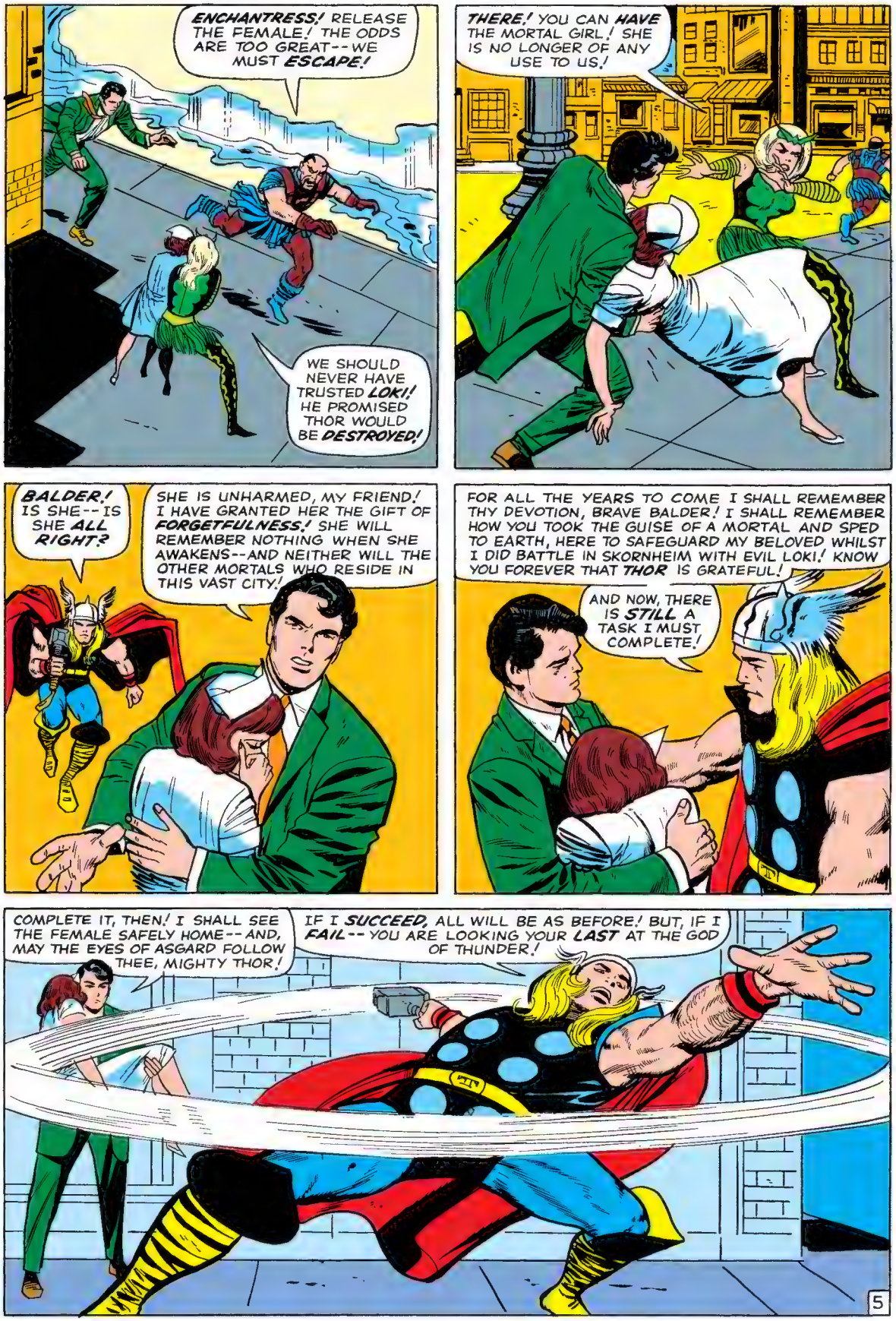

MOMENTS LATER, IN THE PALACE OF ODIN, THE ALL-WISE, THE ALL-POWERFUL--!
THOR LIES, MOST NOBLE ODIN! I POSSESSED NO SUCH MAGIC STONES! THE VICTORY IS RIGHTFULLY MINE!
SILENCE, CRAFTY ONE! I ALONE SHALL DECIDE WHOSE LIPS HAVE MOUTHED A FALSEHOOD!
SEND ME TO EARTH, HONORED FATHER! LET ME BRING THEE BACK PROOF OF LOKI'S DARK DECEIT!

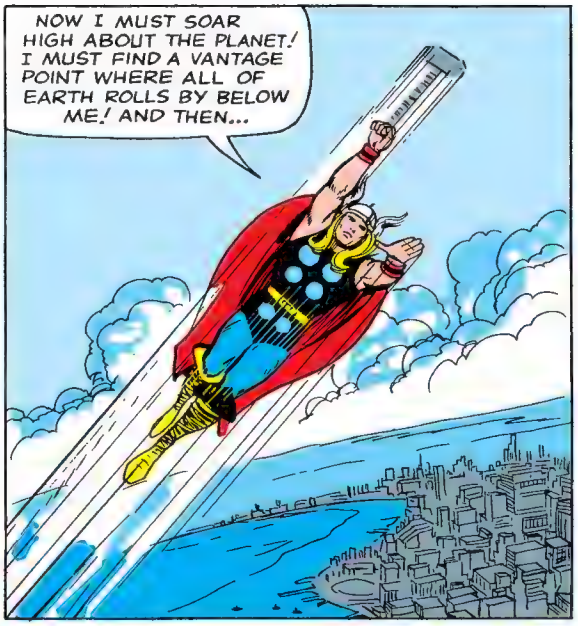
YOU HAVE EARNED THAT BOON, MY SON -- BY YOUR PROWESS IN BATTLE, BY YOUR COUNTLESS VALIANT DEEDS, BY YOUR HEROISM AND UNSWERVING LOYALTY!
THEREFORE, GO THEE TO EARTH! BRING ME LOKI'S BAG OF STONES, IF SUCH THERE BE! YOU HAVE TWENTY-FOUR HOURS BEFORE I PASS FINAL SENTENCE!

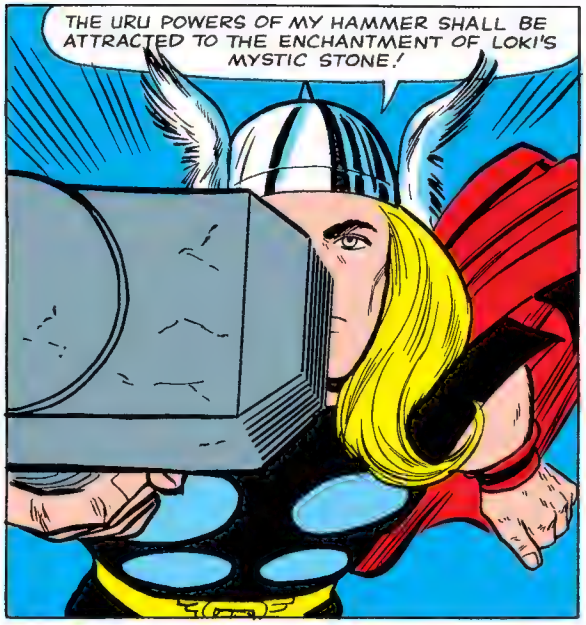
SO BE IT!

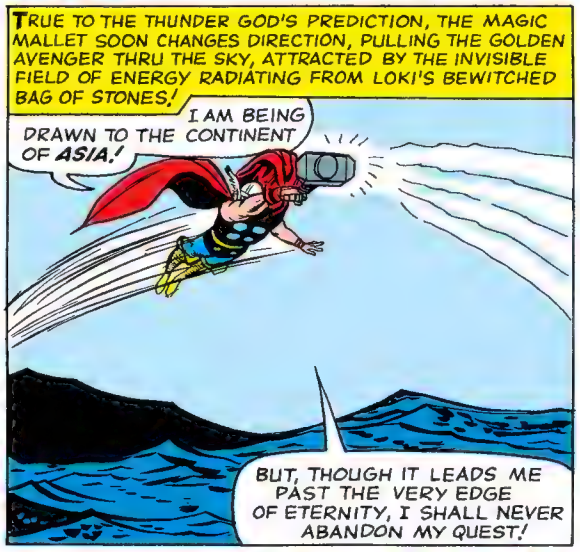
MEANWHILE, AN IMMEASURABLE DISTANCE AWAY, BALDER THE BRAVE BATTLES WITH THE SINISTER EXECUTIONER TO SAFEGUARD THE LIFE OF JANE FOSTER, THE GIRL THOR LOVES!
OF WHAT CONCERN IS THE SAFETY OF ONE EARTH MORTAL TO YOU, BALDER?
SHE IS THE BELOVED OF MY FRIEND! THAT IS REASON ENOUGH, VILLAINOUS ONE!


THE ENCHANTRESS CANNOT STAND IDLY BY WITHOUT AIDING HER PARTNER IN PERFIDY! ONE SIMPLE SPELL MAY YET DEFEAT BALDER!
EVIL DEMONS, HEAR MY CALL! CAUSE THAT SIGN TO QUICKLY FALL!
JUST WHAT I NEEDED-- AN INTERRUPTION, TO ALLOW ME TO DEVISE A NEW PLAN OF ATTACK UPON BALDER!
THIS IS YOUR CHANCE, EXECUTIONER! DEFEAT HIM NOW, WHILST THE CITY STILL LIES BENEATH MY SPELL OF SLUMBER!
BUT SUDDENLY, A STIRRING BATTLE CRY RINGS OUT, AS A FLASHING, FLYING FORM HURTLES TOWARD THE SCENE OF BATTLE--!
THOR!!
BALDER, MY FRIEND! NO LONGER NEED YOU FIGHT THE THUNDER GOD'S FIGHT ALONE, AND UNAIDED!
HOW DID HE GET HERE? DID LOKI LOSE THE TRIAL??
AFTER MENACING HIS LOVED ONE, I DARE NOT FACE HIS WRATH! I MUST INSURE THAT HE NEVER REACHES ME!
THERE! BY SMASHING THAT WATER TRUCK, I'LL BE ABLE TO SLOW HIS ADVANCE--IF I MANAGED TO HIT IT AT JUST THE RIGHT ANGLE!
WHOOSH
A POWERFUL GEYSER OF WATER-- SHOOTING UP IN FRONT OF ME--OBSCURING MY VISION-- BUT, IT WON'T STOP ME!
4

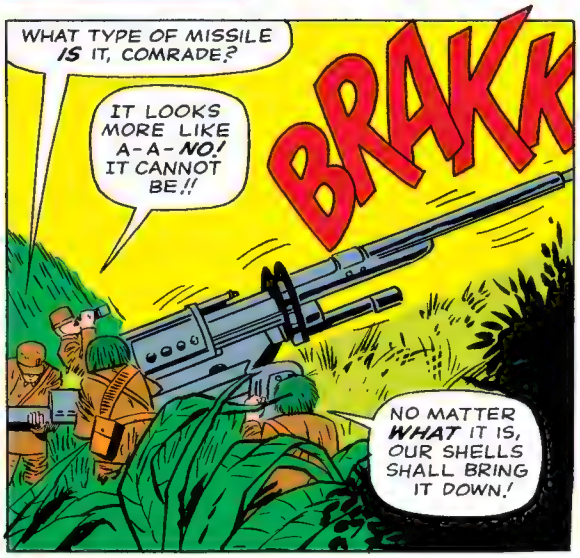

ENCHANTRESS! RELEASE THE FEMALE! THE ODDS ARE TOO GREAT--WE MUST ESCAPE!
WE SHOULD NEVER HAVE TRUSTED LOKI! HE PROMISED THOR WOULD BE DESTROYED!
THERE! YOU CAN HAVE THE MORTAL GIRL! SHE IS NO LONGER OF ANY USE TO US!
BALDER! IS SHE--IS SHE ALL RIGHT?
SHE IS UNHARMED, MY FRIEND! I HAVE GRANTED HER THE GIFT OF FORGETFULNESS! SHE WILL REMEMBER NOTHING WHEN SHE AWAKENS--AND NEITHER WILL THE OTHER MORTALS WHO RESIDE IN THIS VAST CITY!
FOR ALL THE YEARS TO COME I SHALL REMEMBER THY DEVOTION, BRAVE BALDER! I SHALL REMEMBER HOW YOU TOOK THE GUISE OF A MORTAL AND SPED TO EARTH, HERE TO SAFEGUARD MY BELOVED WHILST I DID BATTLE IN SKORNHEIM WITH EVIL LOKI! KNOW YOU FOREVER THAT THOR IS GRATEFUL!
AND NOW, THERE IS STILL A TASK I MUST COMPLETE!
COMPLETE IT, THEN! I SHALL SEE THE FEMALE SAFELY HOME--AND, MAY THE EYES OF ASGARD FOLLOW THEE, MIGHTY THOR!
IF I SUCCEED, ALL WILL BE AS BEFORE! BUT, IF I FAIL--YOU ARE LOOKING YOUR LAST AT THE GOD OF THUNDER!

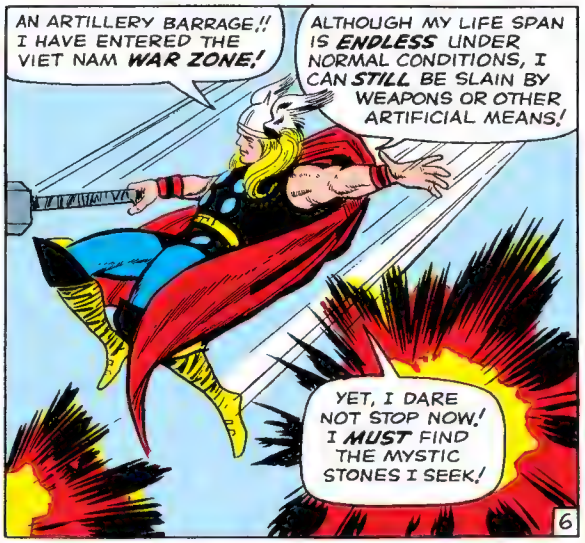

NOW I MUST SOAR HIGH ABOUT THE PLANET! I MUST FIND A VANTAGE POINT WHERE ALL OF EARTH ROLLS BY BELOW ME! AND THEN...

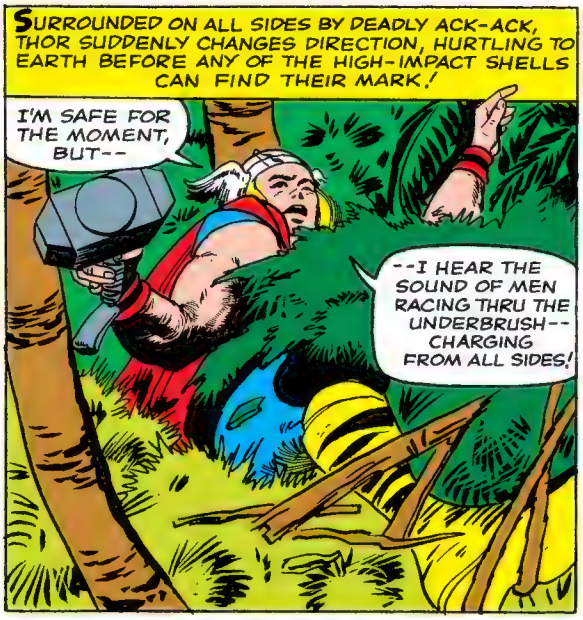

THE URU POWERS OF MY HAMMER SHALL BE ATTRACTED TO THE ENCHANTMENT OF LOKI'S MYSTIC STONE!


TRUE TO THE THUNDER GOD'S PREDICTION, THE MAGIC MALLET SOON CHANGES DIRECTION, PULLING THE GOLDEN AVENGER THRU THE SKY, ATTRACTED BY THE INVISIBLE FIELD OF ENERGY RADIATING FROM LOKI'S BEWITCHED BAG OF STONES!
I AM BEING DRAWN TO THE CONTINENT OF ASIA!
BUT, THOUGH IT LEADS ME PAST THE VERY EDGE OF ETERNITY, I SHALL NEVER ABANDON MY QUEST!

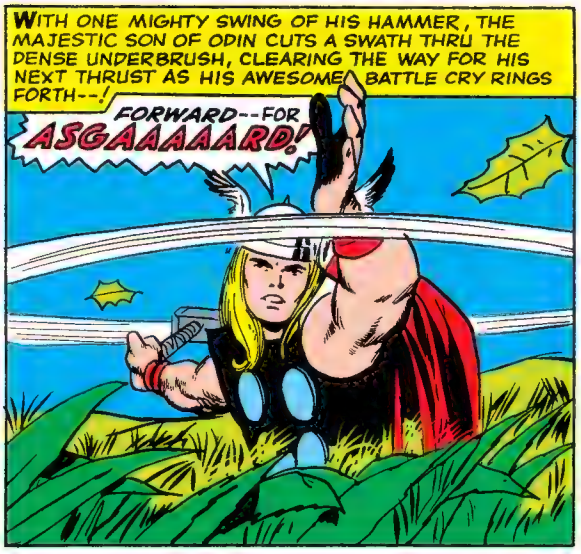
FINALLY, AT A COMMUNIST LOOKOUT POINT IN THE VIET CONG AREA OF VIET NAM...
UNIDENTIFIED OBJECT FLYING OVER OUR LINES!
ALL ANTI-AIRCRAFT BATTERIES-- OPEN FIRE!!

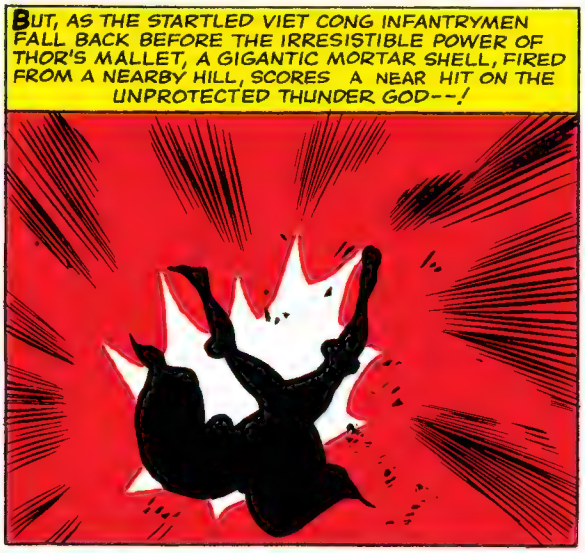

WHAT TYPE OF MISSILE IS IT, COMRADE?
IT LOOKS MORE LIKE A-A-NO! IT CANNOT BE!!
BRAKK
NO MATTER WHAT IT IS, OUR SHELLS SHALL BRING IT DOWN!

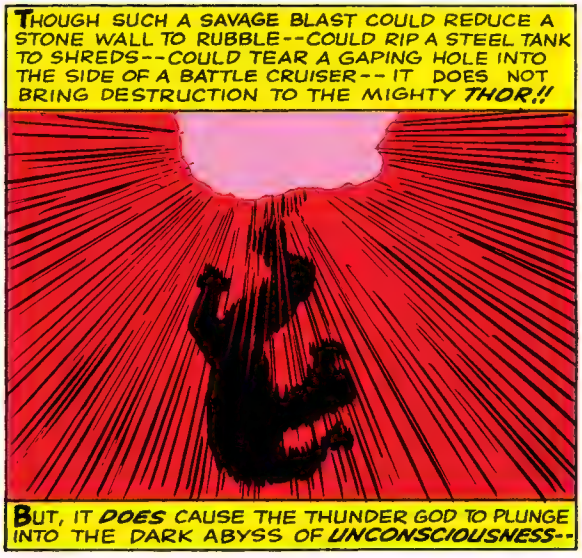

AN ARTILLERY BARRAGE!! I HAVE ENTERED THE VIET NAM WAR ZONE!
ALTHOUGH MY LIFE SPAN IS ENDLESS UNDER NORMAL CONDITIONS, I CAN STILL BE SLAIN BY WEAPONS OR OTHER ARTIFICIAL MEANS!
YET, I DARE NOT STOP NOW! I MUST FIND THE MYSTIC STONES I SEEK!

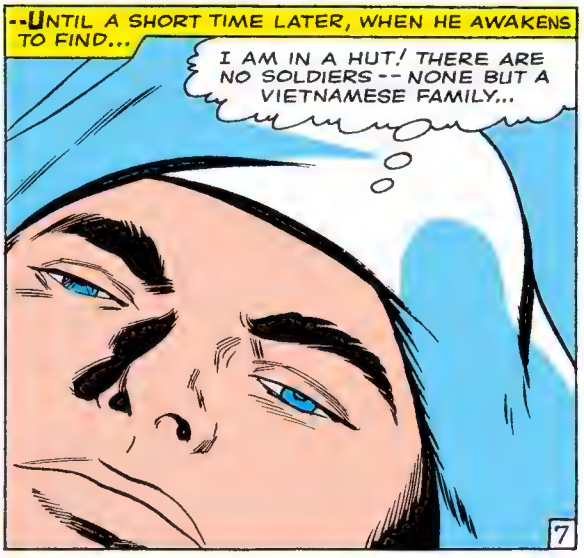

SURROUNDED ON ALL SIDES BY DEADLY ACK-ACK, THOR SUDDENLY CHANGES DIRECTION, HURTLING TO EARTH BEFORE ANY OF THE HIGH-IMPACT SHELLS CAN FIND THEIR MARK!
I'M SAFE FOR THE MOMENT, BUT--
--I HEAR THE SOUND OF MEN RACING THRU THE UNDERBRUSH--CHARGING FROM ALL SIDES!

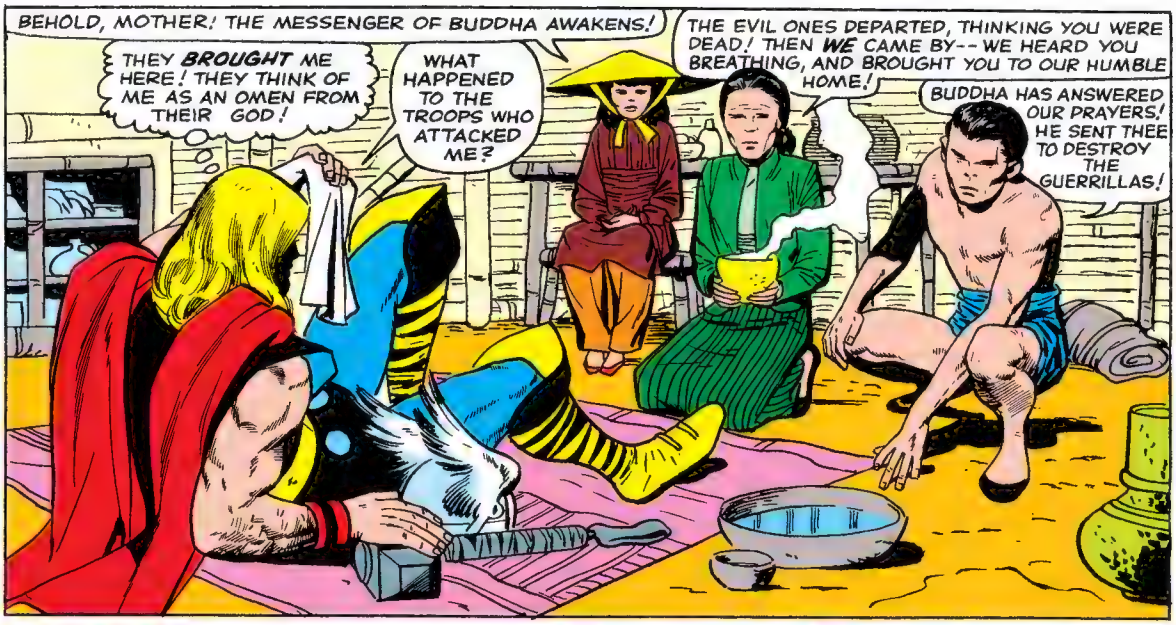
THEY'RE ATTACKING! THERE IS NO WAY TO AVOID BATTLING WITH THEM! SO BE IT!

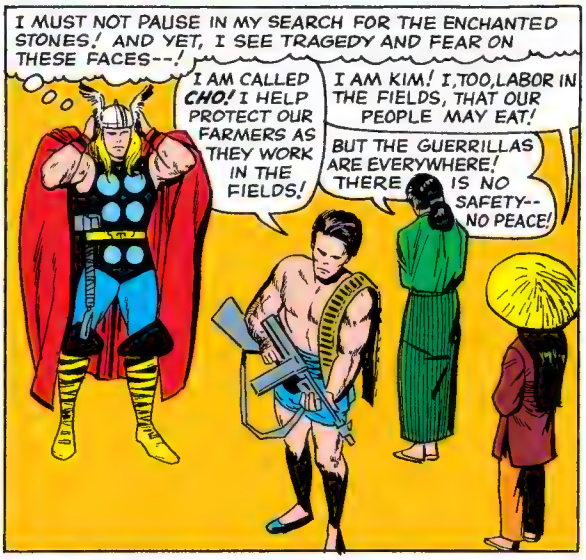

WITH ONE MIGHTY SWING OF HIS HAMMER, THE MAJESTIC SON OF ODIN CUTS A SWATH THRU THE DENSE UNDERBRUSH, CLEARING THE WAY FOR HIS NEXT THRUST AS HIS AWESOME BATTLE CRY RINGS FORTH--!
FORWARD--FOR ASGAAAAARD!

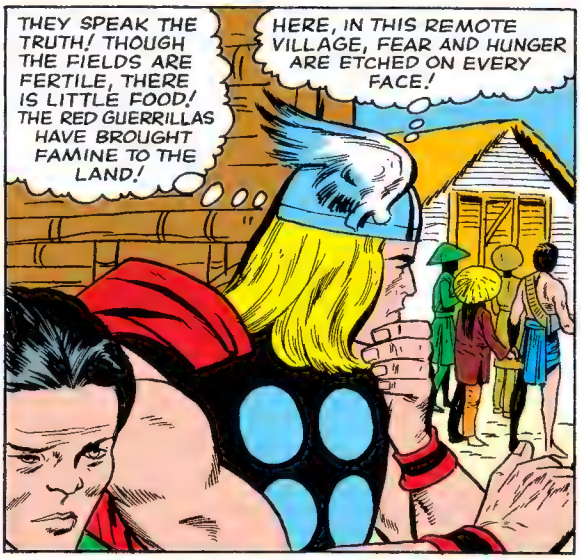

BUT, AS THE STARTLED VIET CONG INFANTRYMEN FALL BACK BEFORE THE IRRESISTIBLE POWER OF THOR'S MALLET, A GIGANTIC MORTAR SHELL, FIRED FROM A NEARBY HILL, SCORES A NEAR HIT ON THE UNPROTECTED THUNDER GOD--!

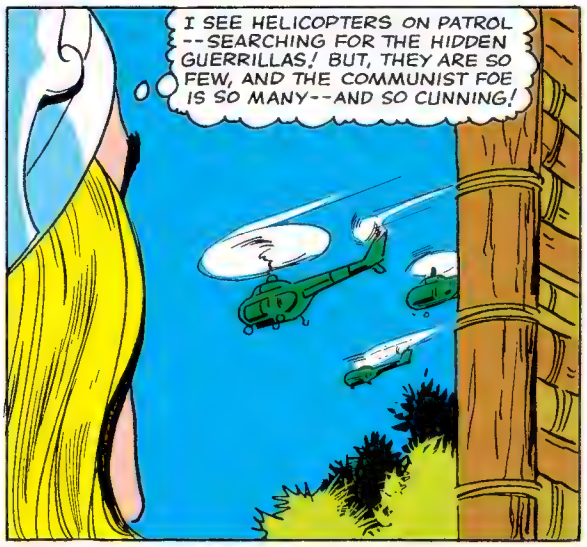

THOUGH SUCH A SAVAGE BLAST COULD REDUCE A STONE WALL TO RUBBLE--COULD RIP A STEEL TANK TO SHREDS--COULD TEAR A GAPING HOLE INTO THE SIDE OF A BATTLE CRUISER--IT DOES NOT BRING DESTRUCTION TO THE MIGHTY THOR!!
BUT, IT DOES CAUSE THE THUNDER GOD TO PLUNGE INTO THE DARK ABYSS OF UNCONSCIOUSNESS--


--UNTIL A SHORT TIME LATER, WHEN HE AWAKENS TO FIND...
I AM IN A HUT! THERE ARE NO SOLDIERS--NONE BUT A VIETNAMESE FAMILY...


BEHOLD, MOTHER! THE MESSENGER OF BUDDHA AWAKENS!
THEY BROUGHT ME HERE! THEY THINK OF ME AS AN OMEN FROM THEIR GOD!
WHAT HAPPENED TO THE TROOPS WHO ATTACKED ME?
THE EVIL ONES DEPARTED, THINKING YOU WERE DEAD! THEN WE CAME BY--WE HEARD YOU BREATHING, AND BROUGHT YOU TO OUR HUMBLE HOME!
BUDDHA HAS ANSWERED OUR PRAYERS! HE SENT THEE TO DESTROY THE GUERRILLAS!

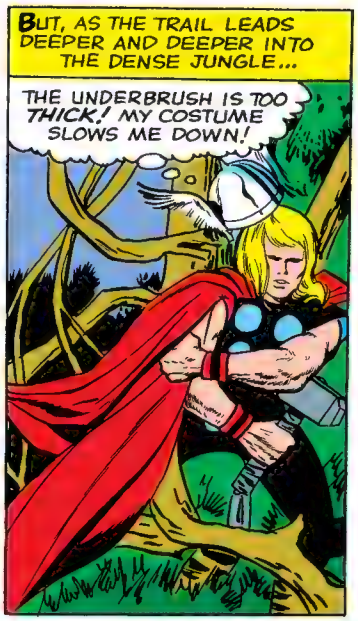

I MUST NOT PAUSE IN MY SEARCH FOR THE ENCHANTED STONES! AND YET, I SEE TRAGEDY AND FEAR ON THESE FACES--!
I AM CALLED CHO! I HELP PROTECT OUR FARMERS AS THEY WORK IN THE FIELDS!
I AM KIM! I,TOO,LABOR IN THE FIELDS, THAT OUR PEOPLE MAY EAT!
BUT THE GUERRILLAS ARE EVERYWHERE! THERE IS NO SAFETY--NO PEACE!

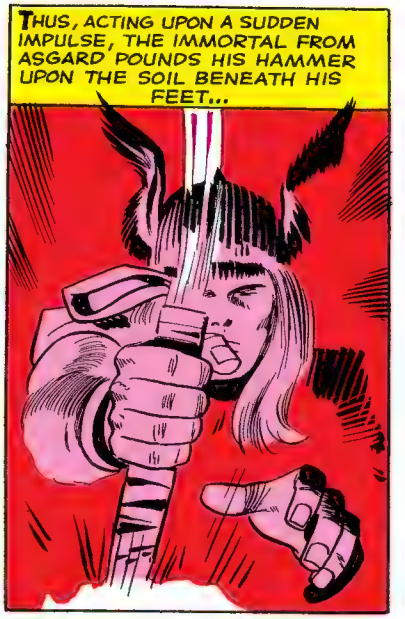

THEY SPEAK THE TRUTH! THOUGH THE FIELDS ARE FERTILE, THERE IS LITTLE FOOD! THE RED GUERRILLAS HAVE BROUGHT FAMINE TO THE LAND!
HERE, IN THIS REMOTE VILLAGE, FEAR AND HUNGER ARE ETCHED ON EVERY FACE!

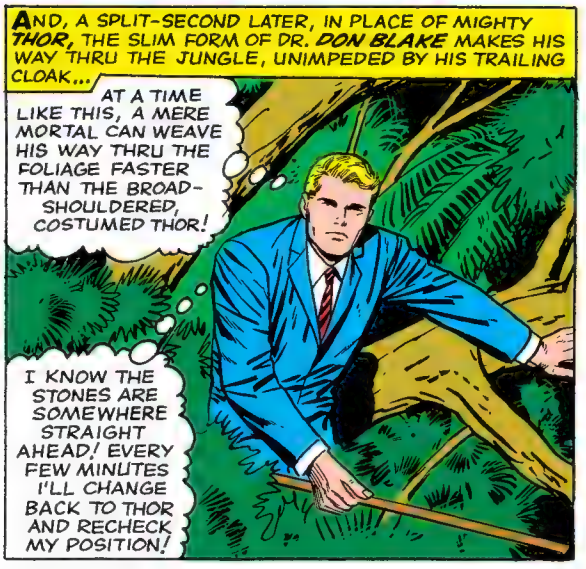

I SEE HELICOPTERS ON PATROL --SEARCHING FOR THE HIDDEN GUERRILLAS! BUT, THEY ARE SO FEW, AND THE COMMUNIST FOE IS SO MANY--AND SO CUNNING!

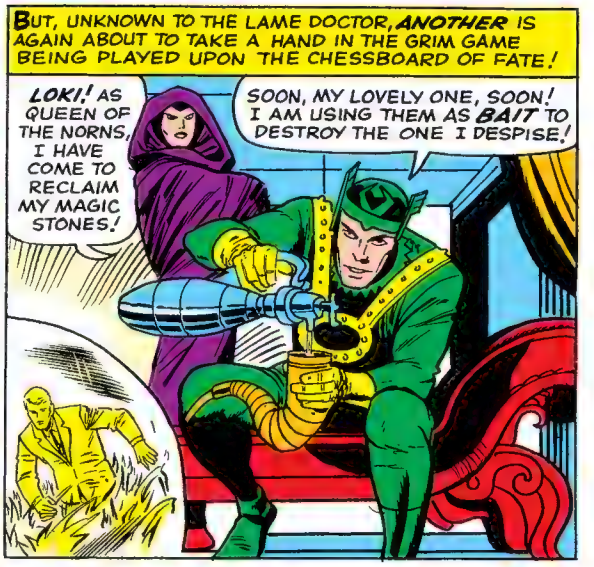
THEN, BEFORE THOR CAN DECIDE UPON HIS NEXT MOVE, FATE ITSELF POINTS THE WAY--!
MY URU HAMMER TINGLES IN MY HAND! THE STONES I SEEK ARE SOMEWHERE NEAR!

UNHESITATINGLY, THE GOLDEN AVENGER FOLLOWS THE TINGLING OF HIS HAMMER, UNTIL HE LEAVES THE TINY VILLAGE BEHIND HIM...
ONCE THE STONES ARE MINE, I SHALL RETURN TO AID THOSE WHO FIGHT THE TYRANTS!

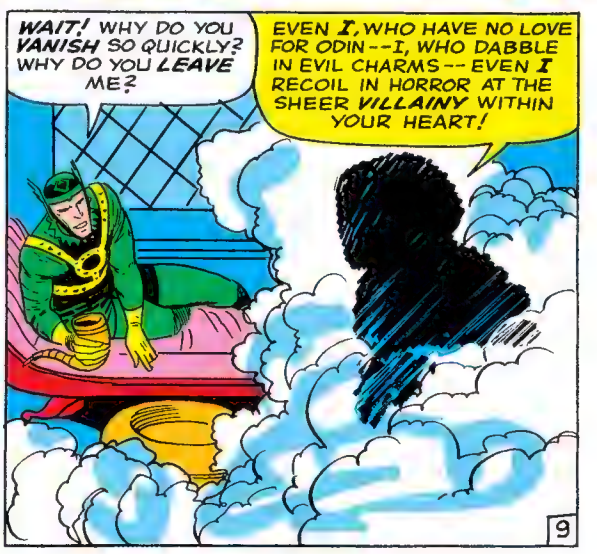

BUT, AS THE TRAIL LEADS DEEPER AND DEEPER INTO THE DENSE JUNGLE...
THE UNDERBRUSH IS TOO THICK! MY COSTUME SLOWS ME DOWN!

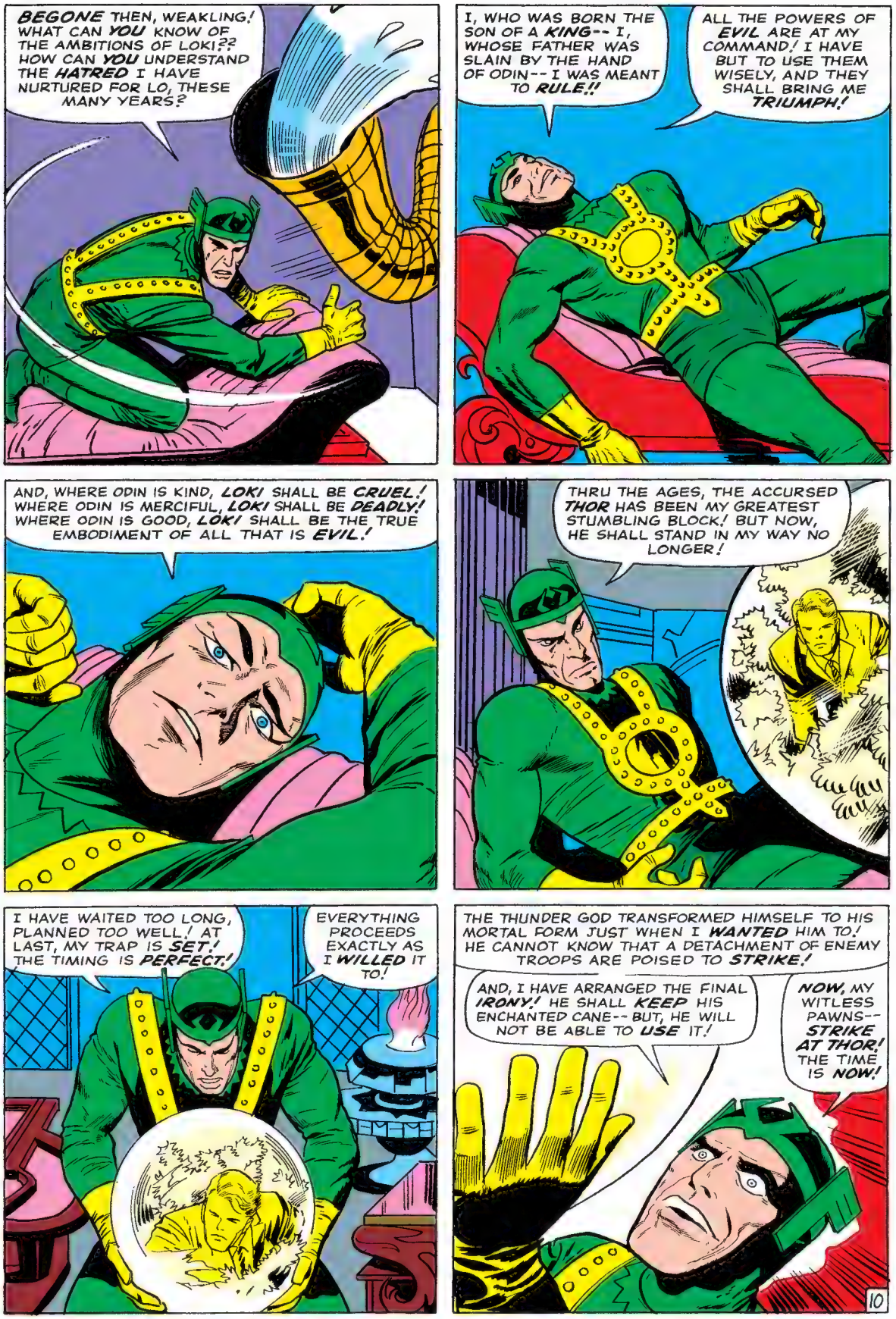

THUS, ACTING UPON A SUDDEN IMPULSE, THE IMMORTAL FROM ASGARD POUNDS HIS HAMMER UPON THE SOIL BENEATH HIS FEET...


AND, A SPLIT-SECOND LATER, IN PLACE OF MIGHTY THOR, THE SLIM FORM OF DR. DON BLAKE MAKES HIS WAY THRU THE JUNGLE, UNIMPEDED BY HIS TRAILING CLOAK...
AT A TIME LIKE THIS, A MERE MORTAL CAN WEAVE HIS WAY THRU THE FOLIAGE FASTER THAN THE BROAD-SHOULDERED, COSTUMED THOR!
I KNOW THE STONES ARE SOMEWHERE STRAIGHT AHEAD! EVERY FEW MINUTES I'LL CHANGE BACK TO THOR AND RECHECK MY POSITION!


BUT, UNKNOWN TO THE LAME DOCTOR, ANOTHER IS AGAIN ABOUT TO TAKE A HAND IN THE GRIM GAME BEING PLAYED UPON THE CHESSBOARD OF FATE!
LOKI! AS QUEEN OF THE NORNS, I HAVE COME TO RECLAIM MY MAGIC STONES!
SOON, MY LOVELY ONE, SOON! I AM USING THEM AS BAIT TO DESTROY THE ONE I DESPISE!

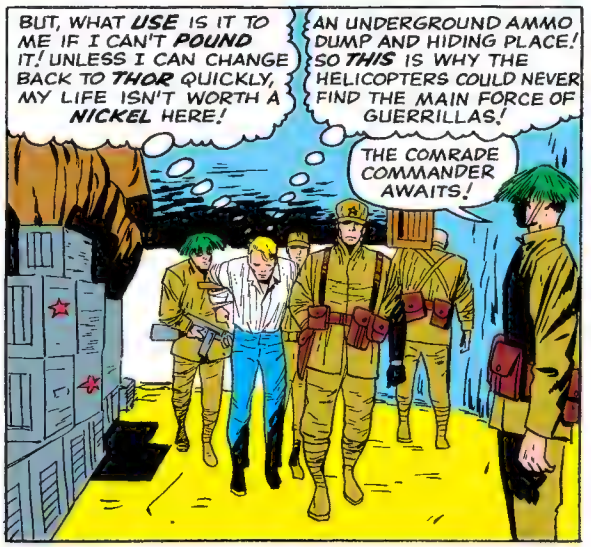
YOU HAVE TRIED EVERY WILE AT YOUR COMMAND, AND STILL MIGHTY THOR LIVES ON! I WARN YOU, LOKI--IF ODIN EVER LEARNS OF YOUR BASE DECEIT--!
ODIN? DO NOT MENTION THAT NAME AGAIN TO ME! ONCE I HAVE DISPOSED OF THOR, I SHALL FIND A WAY TO USURP THE THRONE OF ODIN HIMSELF! FOR, SUCH IS MY DESTINY!

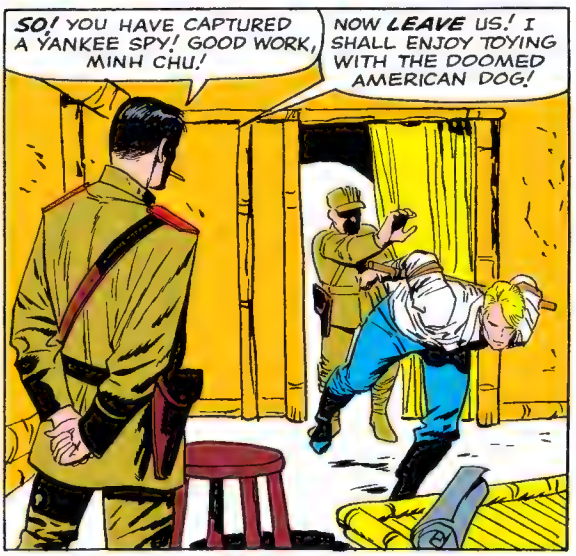

WAIT! WHY DO YOU VANISH SO QUICKLY? WHY DO YOU LEAVE ME?
EVEN I, WHO HAVE NO LOVE FOR ODIN--I, WHO DABBLE IN EVIL CHARMS--EVEN I RECOIL IN HORROR AT THE SHEER VILLAINY WITHIN YOUR HEART!


BEGONE THEN, WEAKLING! WHAT CAN YOU KNOW OF THE AMBITIONS OF LOKI?? HOW CAN YOU UNDERSTAND THE HATRED I HAVE NURTURED FOR LO, THESE MANY YEARS?
I, WHO WAS BORN THE SON OF A KING-- I, WHOSE FATHER WAS SLAIN BY THE HAND OF ODIN-- I WAS MEANT TO RULE!!
ALL THE POWERS OF EVIL ARE AT MY COMMAND! I HAVE BUT TO USE THEM WISELY, AND THEY SHALL BRING ME TRIUMPH!
AND, WHERE ODIN IS KIND, LOKI SHALL BE CRUEL! WHERE ODIN IS MERCIFUL, LOKI SHALL BE DEADLY! WHERE ODIN IS GOOD, LOKI SHALL BE THE TRUE EMBODIMENT OF ALL THAT IS EVIL!
THRU THE AGES, THE ACCURSED THOR HAS BEEN MY GREATEST STUMBLING BLOCK! BUT NOW, HE SHALL STAND IN MY WAY NO LONGER!
I HAVE WAITED TOO LONG, PLANNED TOO WELL! AT LAST, MY TRAP IS SET! THE TIMING IS PERFECT!
EVERYTHING PROCEEDS EXACTLY AS I WILLED IT TO!
THE THUNDER GOD TRANSFORMED HIMSELF TO HIS MORTAL FORM JUST WHEN I WANTED HIM TO! HE CANNOT KNOW THAT A DETACHMENT OF ENEMY TROOPS ARE POISED TO STRIKE!
AND, I HAVE ARRANGED THE FINAL IRONY! HE SHALL KEEP HIS ENCHANTED CANE-- BUT, HE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO USE IT!
NOW, MY WITLESS PAWNS-- STRIKE AT THOR! THE TIME IS NOW!
10

AT THAT SPLIT-SECOND, BEFORE THE STARTLED DR. BLAKE CAN AGAIN POUND HIS ENCHANTED WALKING STICK, HE IS OVERWHELMINGLY ATTACKED AND CAPTURED BY A BAND OF GUERRILLAS WHO POUR FORTH FROM SECRET UNDERGROUND TUNNELS!
IT IS A YANKEE! SEIZE HIM!
UHHH--!
IT IS A PUZZLEMENT! THERE ARE NO OTHERS! HE IS ALONE!

TAKE HIM TO THE COMRADE COMMANDER! HE WILL KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH THE YANKEE DOG!
THEY'RE BINDING MY ARMS WITH MY CANE! AT LEAST THEY HAVEN'T TAKEN IT FROM ME!

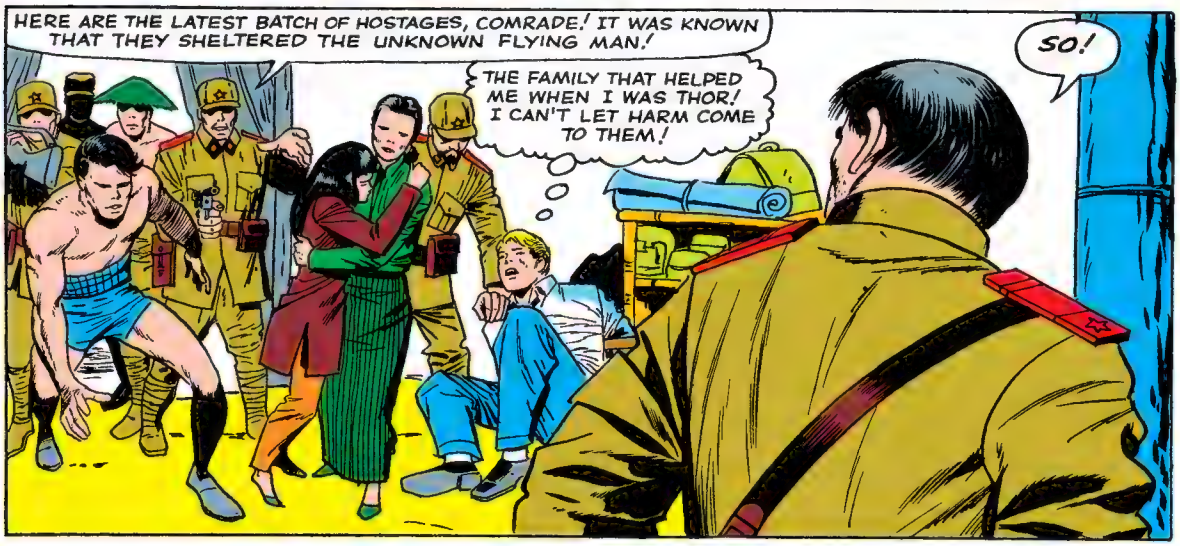

BUT, WHAT USE IS IT TO ME IF I CAN'T POUND IT! UNLESS I CAN CHANGE BACK TO THOR QUICKLY, MY LIFE ISN'T WORTH A NICKEL HERE!
AN UNDERGROUND AMMO DUMP AND HIDING PLACE! SO THIS IS WHY THE HELICOPTERS COULD NEVER FIND THE MAIN FORCE OF GUERRILLAS!
THE COMRADE COMMANDER AWAITS!


SO! YOU HAVE CAPTURED A YANKEE SPY! GOOD WORK, MINH CHU!
NOW LEAVE US! I SHALL ENJOY TOYING WITH THE DOOMED AMERICAN DOG!

YOU CAN BE CERTAIN THAT YOU WILL BE PUT TO DEATH AS A SPY! BUT, IF YOU TELL ME EVERYTHING I WANT TO KNOW, YOUR DEATH MAY BE A QUICK ONE!
NOW SPEAK, YANKEE SWINE! WHO SENT YOU? WHAT IS YOUR MISSION?
I-I'M A DOCTOR! I WANT ONLY TO HELP THE SUFFERING VILLAGERS!
HIS EYES ARE MERCILESS! --COLD AS ICE!

OBSERVE THIS PICTURE! IT WAS TAKEN BY OUR AUTOMATIC SPY CAMERA BATTERY!
HAVE YOU EVER SEEN SUCH A PERSONAGE? OR, IS IT MERELY A YANKEE TRICK? SPEAK!
EVEN IF I KNEW, I'D NEVER TELL YOU!

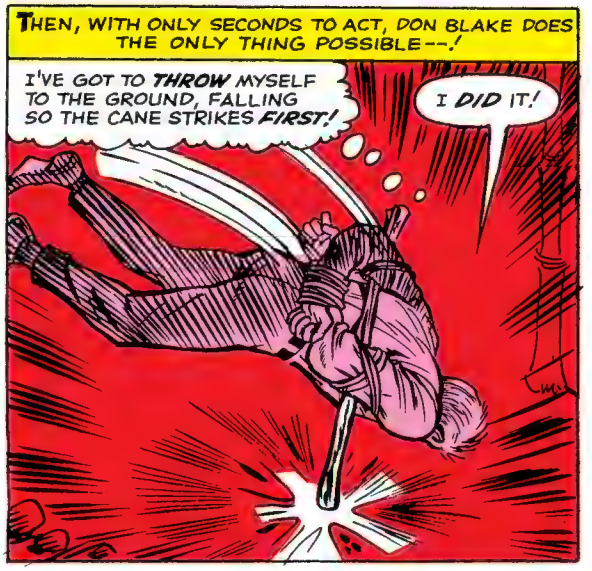
BAH! MY PATIENCE IS AT AN END! NOW I'LL MAKE YOU TALK! IT IS KNOWN HOW SOFT-HEARTED YOU YANKEE FOOLS ARE--!
BRING IN THE HOSTAGES! IF THE AMERICAN DOES NOT TALK--THEY WILL DIE!


HERE ARE THE LATEST BATCH OF HOSTAGES, COMRADE! IT WAS KNOWN THAT THEY SHELTERED THE UNKNOWN FLYING MAN!
THE FAMILY THAT HELPED ME WHEN I WAS THOR! I CAN'T LET HARM COME TO THEM!
SO!

THEY ARE ALL THAT IS LEFT OF ONE OF THE PEASANT FAMILIES FROM THE HILLS, COMRADE! THE MOTHER CLAIMS TO HAVE ONE OTHER SON, BUT SAYS HE HAS BEEN MISSING FOR YEARS!
SILENCE! DO NOT BORE ME WITH UNIMPORTANT DETAILS! LEAVE ME ALONE WITH THEM! BEGONE!

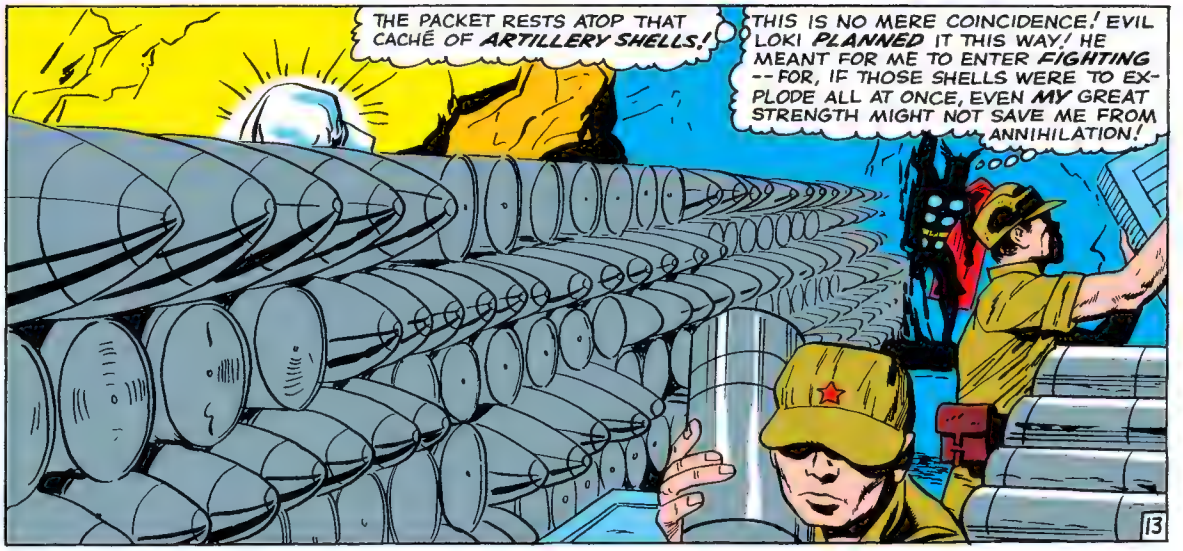
BUT, AS SOON AS THE OTHER TROOPS HAVE LEFT...
SO! IT HAS COME TO THIS! MY OWN FAMILY, DEFYING THE MIGHT OF THE COMMUNIST VIET CONG!
HU SAK, MY BROTHER! IS THIS WHY YOU LEFT US--TO SERVE THE MERCILESS RED TYRANTS?
MY HEART IS GRATEFUL THAT YOUR FATHER NO LONGER LIVES TO WITNESS YOUR SHAME!
I'VE GOT TO MAKE A RUN FOR IT! IT'S NOW OR NEVER!

SURPRISE WAS ON MY SIDE! THEY DIDN'T EXPECT ME TO TRY A DASH FOR FREEDOM!
NOW, IF I CAN JUST FIND A WAY TO STRIKE MY CANE AGAINST THE GROUND BEFORE THEY CATCH ME--!
AFTER HIM! YOU'LL ANSWER TO ME IF THE YANKEE ESCAPES!


THEN, WITH ONLY SECONDS TO ACT, DON BLAKE DOES THE ONLY THING POSSIBLE--!
I'VE GOT TO THROW MYSELF TO THE GROUND, FALLING SO THE CANE STRIKES FIRST!
I DID IT!

EXACTLY ONE HEARTBEAT LATER, THE MIGHTY THUNDER GOD HURLS HIS INCREDULOUS PURSUERS ASIDE AS THOUGH THEY'RE MADE OF STRAW...!
BACK! BACK! FLEE, WHILE STILL YOU MAY!
NOTHING SHALL BAR THE PATH OF THOR, SON OF ODIN!

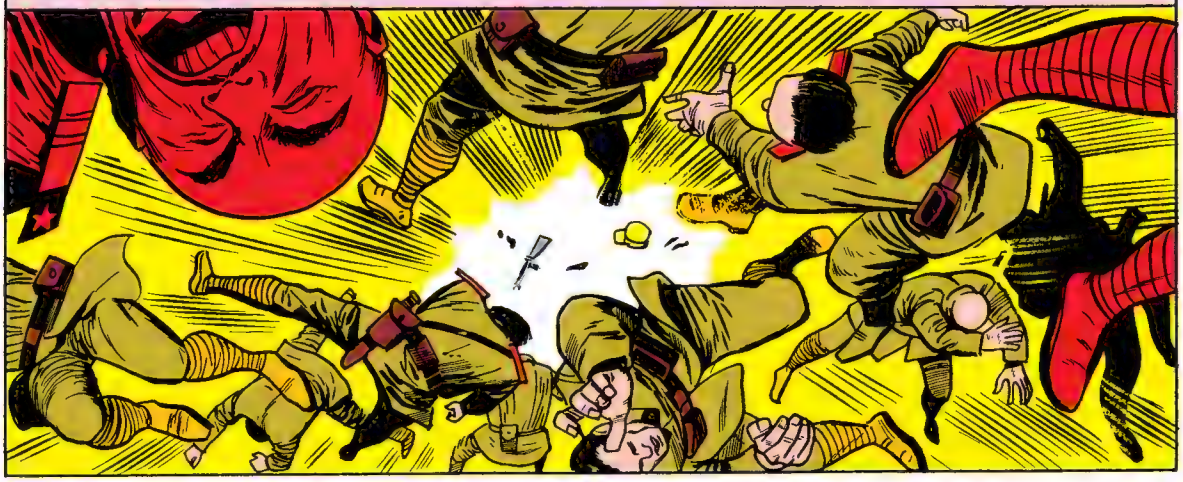
MY HAMMER! IT ALL BUT LEAPS FROM MY HAND! LOKI'S ENCHANTED STONES MUST BE RIGHT WITHIN REACH!
I SEE THEM-- WITHIN THAT CAVE AHEAD!


THE PACKET RESTS ATOP THAT CACHÉ OF ARTILLERY SHELLS!
THIS IS NO MERE COINCIDENCE! EVIL LOKI PLANNED IT THIS WAY! HE MEANT FOR ME TO ENTER FIGHTING --FOR, IF THOSE SHELLS WERE TO EXPLODE ALL AT ONCE, EVEN MY GREAT STRENGTH MIGHT NOT SAVE ME FROM ANNIHILATION!

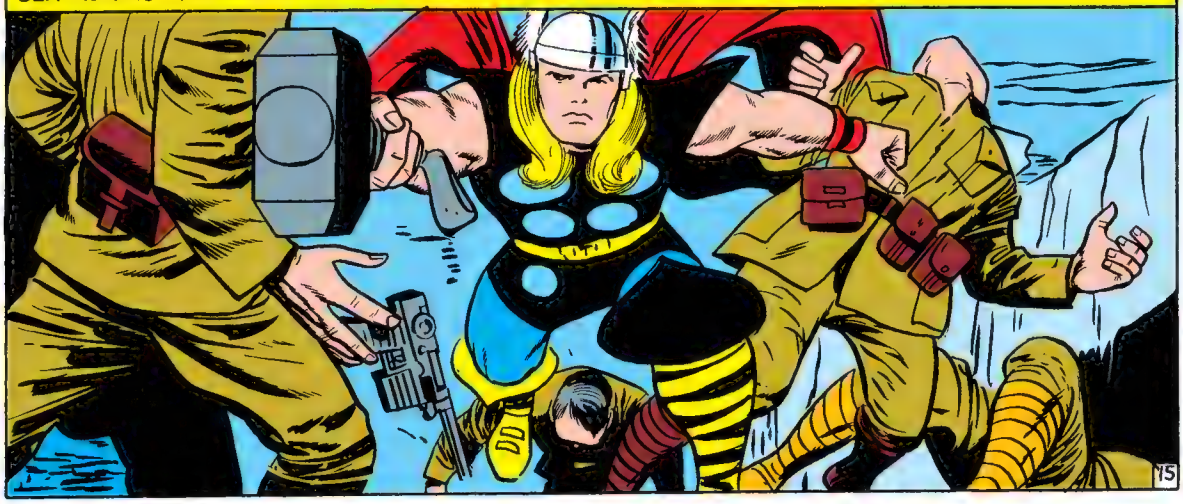
MEANWHILE...
YOU ARE NO LONGER MY BROTHER! YOU HAVE BETRAYED YOUR FAMILY, YOUR PEOPLE, BY SERVING THE RED TERRORISTS!
I HAVE POWER OF LIFE AND DEATH HERE! YOU DARE SPEAK SO TO ME?!! WATCH YOUR TONGUE, YOUNG FOOL!
HIS WORDS ARE TRUE, HU SAK! YOU HAVE BROUGHT GREAT SHAME TO US ALL!
NO! NO! I AM COMMANDER HERE! YOU DO NOT MATTER! NOBODY MATTERS! ONLY THE COMMUNIST CAUSE IS IMPORTANT! PEOPLE MEAN NOTHING! HUMAN LIVES MEAN NOTHING!
DON'T YOU UNDER-STAND?? YOU'RE WRONG! WRONG! WRONG!
AND THEN, THE CHAMBER IS STILL! UNTIL, AN ANGUISHED CRY RINGS OUT--!
CHO! MY BROTHER! WHAT HAVE I DONE??
I DID NOT MEAN IT TO END LIKE THIS! I ONLY MEANT TO-- TO-- MOTHER!! OH-- NO!
SHE THREW HERSELF IN THE PATH OF THE BULLETS! SHE WANTED TO SAVE CHO! BUT NOW-- BOTH OF THEM--!!
MOTHER-- SPEAK TO ME! MOTHER--!!
IT IS--HOPELESS!! I SHALL NEVER HEAR HER VOICE AGAIN!
KIM-- MY SISTER-- COME BACK!! KIM--!
HELP! HELP! HE IS A MURDERER! MY OWN BROTHER! HELP--!
THAT CRY! FROM WITHIN THE TUNNEL! IT IS THE GIRL--KIM! I MUST GO TO HER! IF SHE IS IN DANGER HERE, ONLY THOR CAN SAVE HER!
14

THEN, WITH THE FURY OF A THOUSAND STORMS, WITH THE RAGE THAT ONLY A THUNDER GOD CAN FEEL, THE MIGHTY *THOR* BATTERS HIS WAY THRU THE ONRUSHING GUERRILLAS--!

SWINGING HIS SHATTERING HAMMER WITH THE CRUSHING, SMASHING FORCE OF A NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST, HIS EYES BLAZING LIKE A THOUSAND SUNS--THE STEEL CORDS OF HIS MIGHTY MUSCLES RIPPLING ALONG HIS GREAT ARMS--THOR ADVANCES RELENTLESSLY AS AN AVALANCHE!



--UNTIL, SCANT SECONDS LATER, THE VALIANT IMMORTAL EMERGES TRIUMPHANT, AS--NEVER SLACKENING HIS PACE--HE RACES TOWARDS THE GIRL WHOSE CRY HAD SUMMONED HIM--!

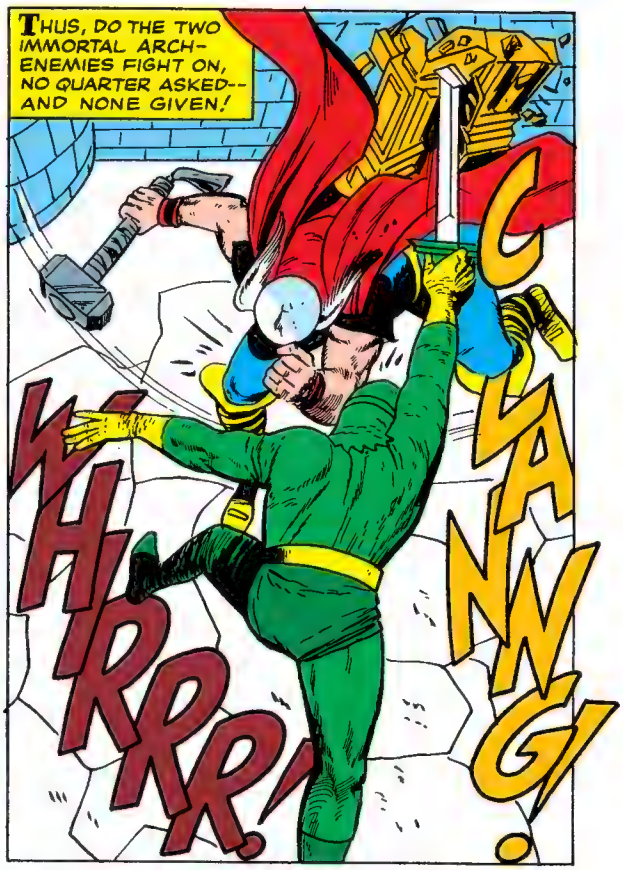


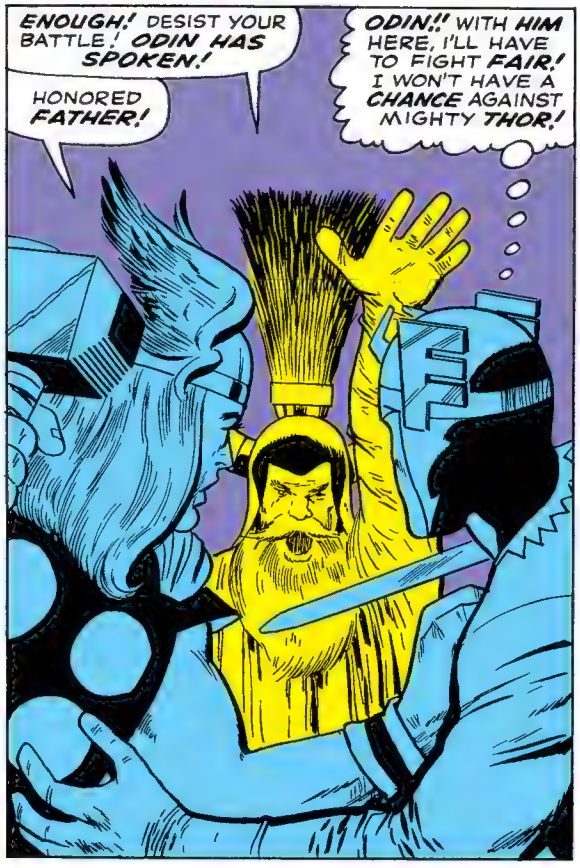
SAVE ME! SAVE ME! DO NOT LET HIM SHOOT ME, AS HE DID THE OTHERS!
OTHERS--?
IT IS THE ONE I HAVE BEEN SEEKING! BUT NOW-- IT DOES NOT SEEM TO MATTER!
I MUST TAKE THIS CHILD FAR FROM THIS PLACE OF TRAGEDY! BUT, ONCE I KNOW THAT SHE IS SAFE, THEN MARK YOU WELL MY WORDS, MORTAL--
NO PLACE ON EARTH WILL HIDE YOU FROM ME! FOR, I SHALL RETURN, AND WHEN I DO, THE HAMMER OF THOR SHALL BE HEARD IN EVERY VILLAGE-- IN EVERY HOME-- IN EVERY HEART THRUOUT THIS TORTURED LAND!
YOU NEED NOT FEAR THAT I SHALL TRY TO ESCAPE! THE KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT I HAVE DONE SHALL KEEP ME A PRISONER FOR ALL THE DAYS OF MY LIFE!
HE LEAVES! THERE IS BUT ONE THING REMAINING FOR ME TO DO--!
I HAVE BROUGHT DEATH TO MY FAMILY-- AND DISHONOR TO MY NAME! BUT, I SHALL FACE MY FATE LIKE A SOLDIER!
IT WAS COMMUNISM THAT MADE ME WHAT I AM-- THAT SHAPED ME INTO A BRUTAL, UNTHINKING INSTRUMENT OF DESTRUCTION! TO COMMUNISM, THEN-- MAY IT VANISH FROM THE FACE OF THE EARTH AND THE MEMORY OF MANKIND!
THE AMMUNITION! IT'S BEEN BLOWN UP! THE ENTIRE INSTALLATION IS DESTROYED!
HU SAK IS DEAD, LITTLE KIM, BUT, IT IS AS I EXPECTED --HE DIED A MAN!
the END
THE EPIC TALE YOU HAVE JUST READ IS BUT A PRELUDE TO THE STILL GREATER ONE WHICH AWAITS YOU NEXT ISSUE! SO, TILL WE MEET AGAIN, MAY THE STARS OF ASGARD SHINE ON THEE!
16

Tales of ASGARD
HOME OF THE MIGHTY NORSE GODS!
"the SWORD in the SCABBARD!"
BEGINNING: ONE OF THE GREATEST SAGAS OF ALL TIME!!
BY:
STAN LEE + JACK KIRBY
INKING: VINCE COLLETTA
LETTERING: ARTIE SIMEK
ASGARD HAS BEEN AT PEACE TOO LONG! HAVING NO NATURAL ENEMIES TO BATTLE, THE BORED, HOT-BLOODED WARRIORS OF ODIN SOON BEGIN TO BRAWL WITH EACH OTHER!

BUT ODIN, MIGHTY OVERLORD OF ASGARD, RULER OF ALL HE SURVEYS, BEHOLDS THE TEMPER OF HIS FIGHTING MEN, AND LO--HE IS SORE DISPLEASED!
WARRIORS OF ASGARD!! DEFENDERS OF THE RAINBOW BRIDGE!! IS THIS WHAT YOU HAVE COME TO??!
THEN, HIS EYES BLAZING LIKE THE FURY OF A THOUSAND SUNS--HIS VOICE RINGS OUT--WITH FORCE ENOUGH TO SHATTER MOUNTAINS!
LET THE FIGHTING CEASE!! I SO COMMAND!!
THE LORD ODIN HAS SPOKEN!
WE CAN DO NAUGHT BUT OBEY!
WHERE ARE MY SONS? WHERE ARE THOR AND LOKI??
YOU WILL FIND THEM IN THE EAST CHAMBER, SUPREMACY!
THEY WERE EAGER TO BATTLE IN THE JOUSTING ROOM!
2

AND, ENTERING THE BARREN CHAMBER, ODIN SEES...
IT IS YOU EVIL LOKI, WHO SOWS THE SEEDS OF DISCONTENT AMONGST OUR WARRIORS! BUT THIS TIME YOU HAVE GONE TOO FAR!
YOUR HAMMER HOLDS NO TERROR FOR ME, THUNDER GOD! NOT WHILE I POSSESS MY BE-WITCHED BLADE!

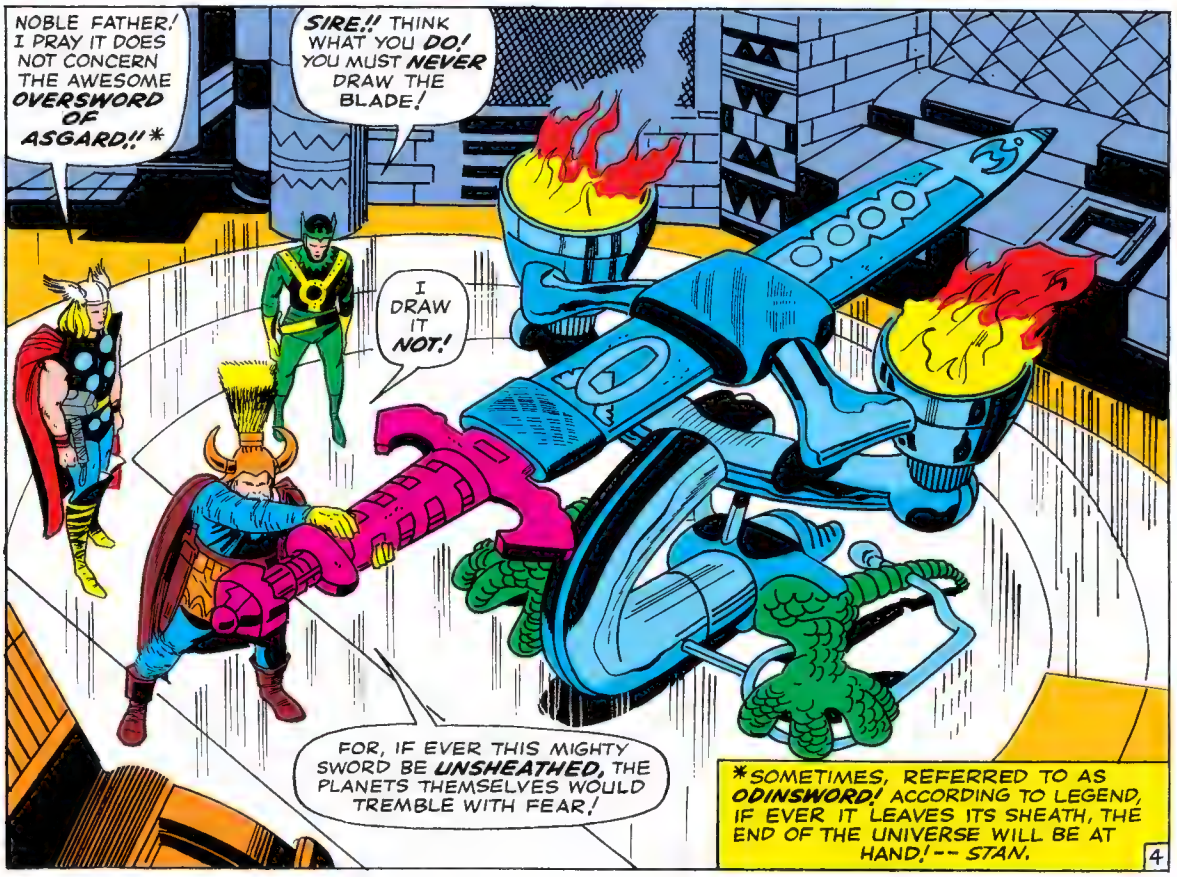

THUS, DO THE TWO IMMORTAL ARCH-ENEMIES FIGHT ON, NO QUARTER ASKED--AND NONE GIVEN!
WHRRR!
CLANNG!


ENOUGH! DESIST YOUR BATTLE! ODIN HAS SPOKEN!
HONORED FATHER!
ODIN!! WITH HIM HERE, I'LL HAVE TO FIGHT FAIR! I WON'T HAVE A CHANCE AGAINST MIGHTY THOR!

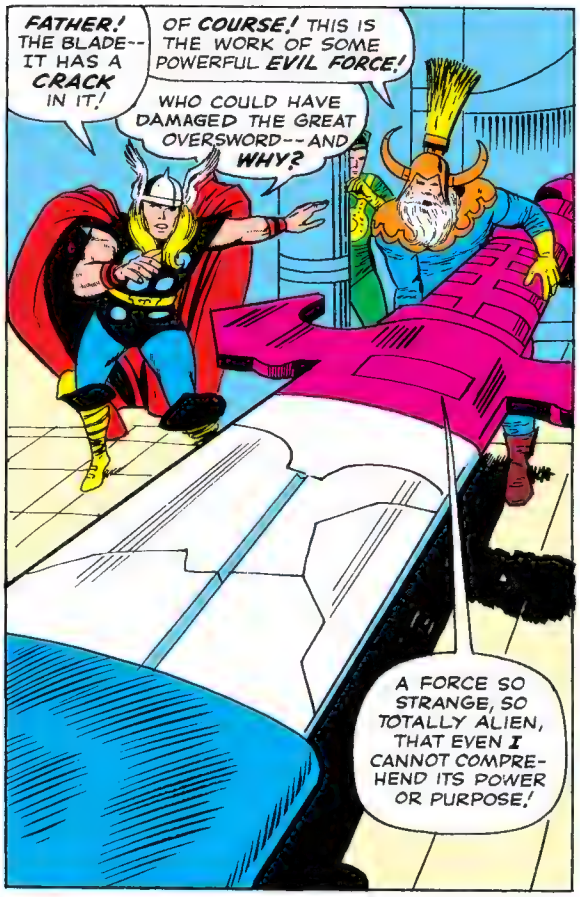
LET THERE BE AN END TO THIS SQUABBLING AND BATTLING, HERE IN THE GOLDEN CITY OF ASGARD!
THE PENALTY SHALL BE DEATH!! DEATH TO HIM WHO STRIKES ANOTHER BLOW!
I HAVE SPOKEN!

IMPERIAL ONE, THE FAULT WAS NOT MINE! IT WAS THOR WHO STARTED IT!
YOU LIE, PRINCE OF VILLAINS!!
SILENCE! I BID YOU BOTH COME WITH ME!

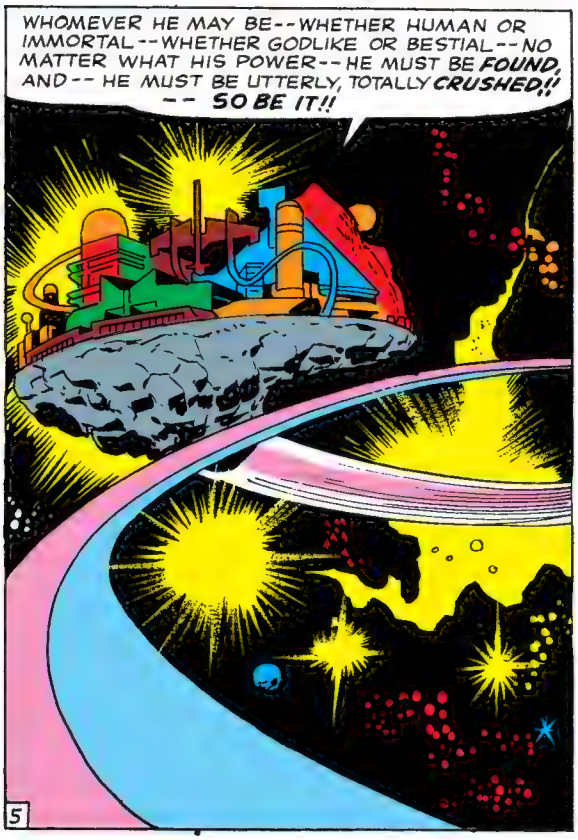
I AM FACED WITH A GRAVE PROBLEM IN MY PALACE! IN ORDER TO SOLVE IT, YOU TWO MAY SOON BE FIGHTING SIDE-BY-SIDE!
WHAT IS THE PROBLEM, SIRE?
YOU SHALL SEE IN GOOD TIME--!
FOLLOW ME!


NOBLE FATHER! I PRAY IT DOES NOT CONCERN THE AWESOME OVERSWORD OF ASGARD!!*
SIRE!! THINK WHAT YOU DO! YOU MUST NEVER DRAW THE BLADE!
I DRAW IT NOT!
FOR, IF EVER THIS MIGHTY SWORD BE UNSHEATHED, THE PLANETS THEMSELVES WOULD TREMBLE WITH FEAR!

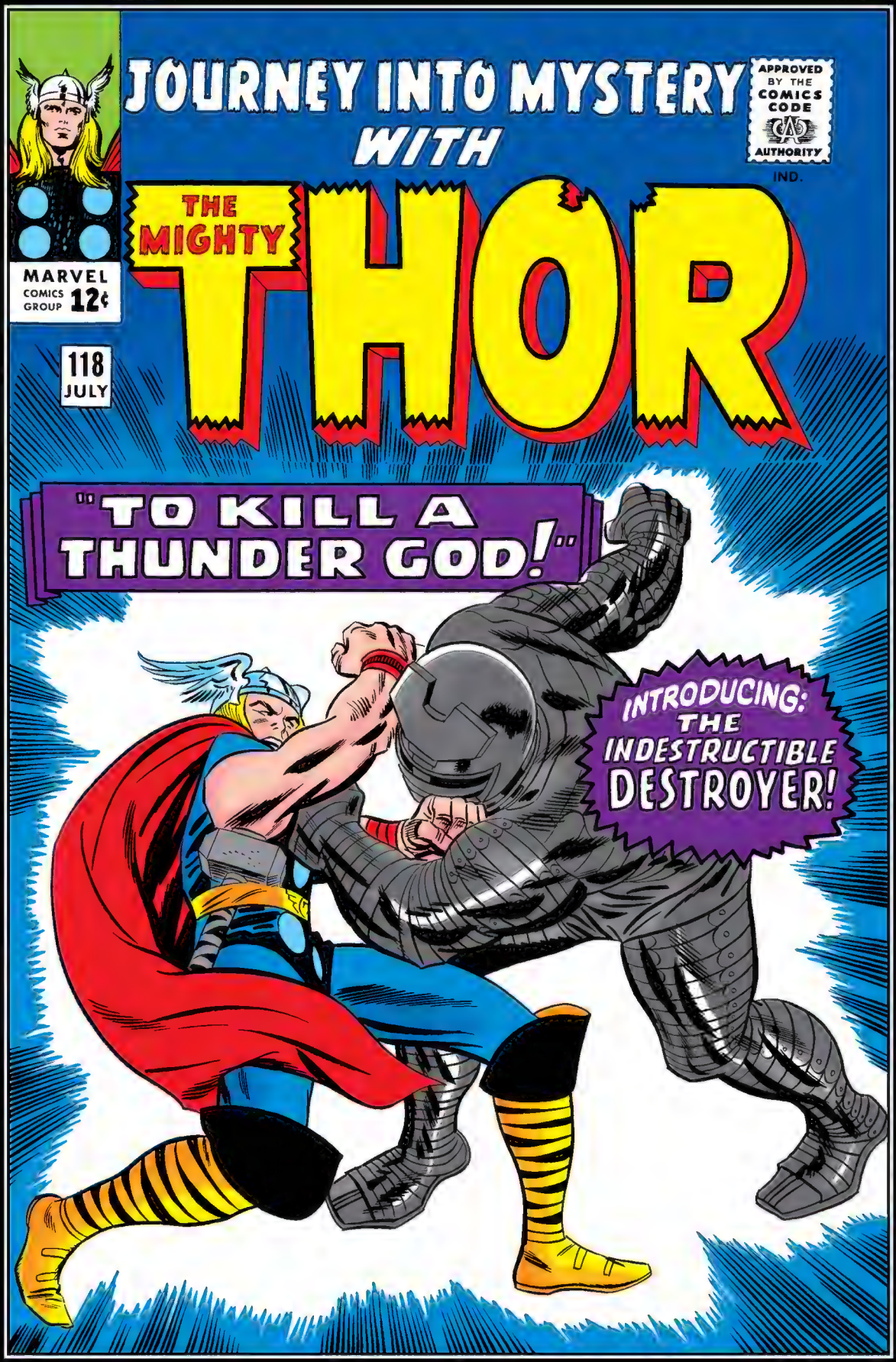
*SOMETIMES, REFERRED TO AS ODINSWORD! ACCORDING TO LEGEND, IF EVER IT LEAVES ITS SHEATH, THE END OF THE UNIVERSE WILL BE AT HAND! -- STAN.


FATHER! THE BLADE--IT HAS A CRACK IN IT!
OF COURSE! THIS IS THE WORK OF SOME POWERFUL EVIL FORCE!
WHO COULD HAVE DAMAGED THE GREAT OVERSWORD--AND WHY?
A FORCE SO STRANGE, SO TOTALLY ALIEN, THAT EVEN I CANNOT COMPREHEND ITS POWER OR PURPOSE!

BUT, SIRE--THE LARGER THE CRACK IN THE BLADE BECOMES, THE CLOSER WE COME TO ANNIHILATION!!
AYE! UNLESS I CAN LEARN WHO MY HIDDEN FOE IS--AND THEN DESTROY HIM!


WHOMEVER HE MAY BE--WHETHER HUMAN OR IMMORTAL--WHETHER GODLIKE OR BESTIAL--NO MATTER WHAT HIS POWER--HE MUST BE FOUND, AND--HE MUST BE UTTERLY, TOTALLY CRUSHED!! --SO BE IT!!
5

THUS, I ORDER THE TWO OF YOU ON AN EXPEDITION--FIND OUR UNKNOWN ENEMY, AND THEN--DESTROY HIM!
YOU DARE NOT FAIL, FOR--IF YOU DO, THE CRACK IN THE OVERSWORD MAY GROW LARGER, AND A UNIVERSE WILL PERISH!!
THE END
NEXT ISSUE, YOU WILL WITNESS THE SPELLBINDING "START OF THE QUEST"!! FOR ADVENTURE-FANTASY AT ITS GREATEST, DON'T MISS THOR #118--AND, FOR THE LOVE OF ASGARD, KEEP YOUR OVERSWORD SHEATHED!


JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY
WITH
THE MIGHTY
THOR
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
IND.
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
12¢
118
JULY
"TO KILL A THUNDER GOD!"
INTRODUCING: THE INDESTRUCTIBLE DESTROYER!

HE, WHO BEARS THE NAME: DESTROYER, POSSESSES THE POWER

"TO KILL A THUNDER GOD!"

REMEMBER LAST ISH? WE SAW MIGHTY *THOR* REGAIN LOKI'S ENCHANTED STONES ON A VIETNAMESE BATTLEFIELD! NOW, ALL THAT REMAINS IS TO CARRY THE GIRL, KIM, TO SAFETY, AND THEN RETURN TO ASGARD! BUT FATE--AND THE *DESTROYER*--HAVE *OTHER* PLANS!

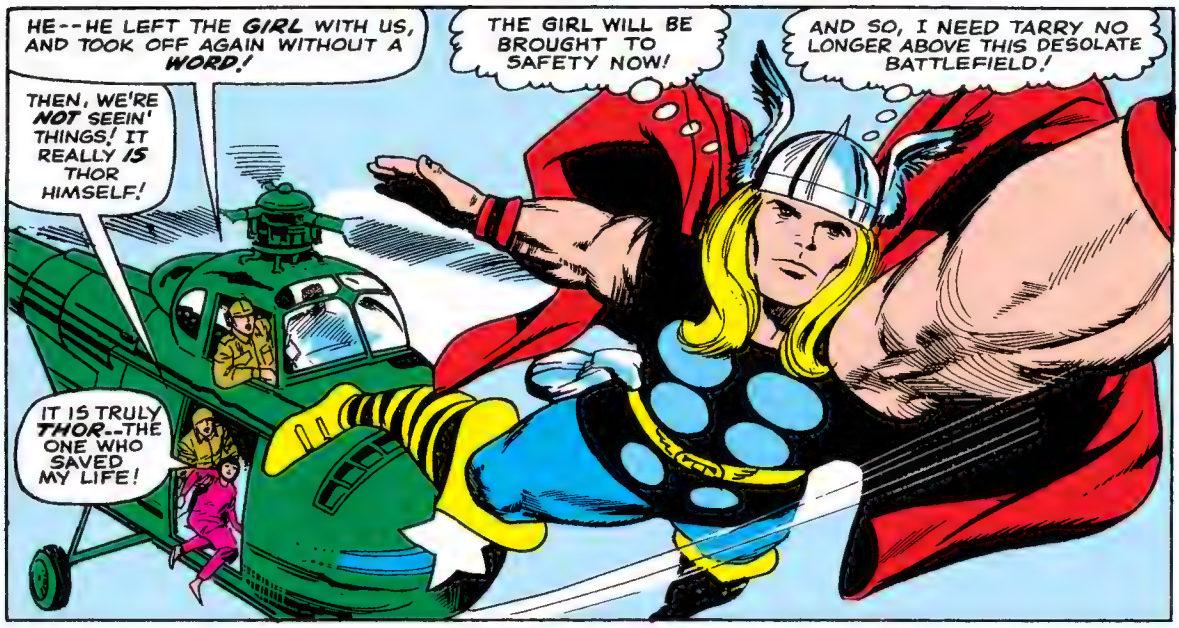
ON YOUR TOES, CHARLIE! ENEMY AIR-CRAFT ZEROING IN AT SIX O'CLOCK!
NO! *WAIT!* IT'S *NOT* A PLANE! IT'S--IT'S--*CHARLIE!* LOOK FOR *YOURSELF!*
I'VE HEARD ABOUT HIM--READ ABOUT HIM--BUT, TO *SEE* HIM THIS WAY--*WOW!*

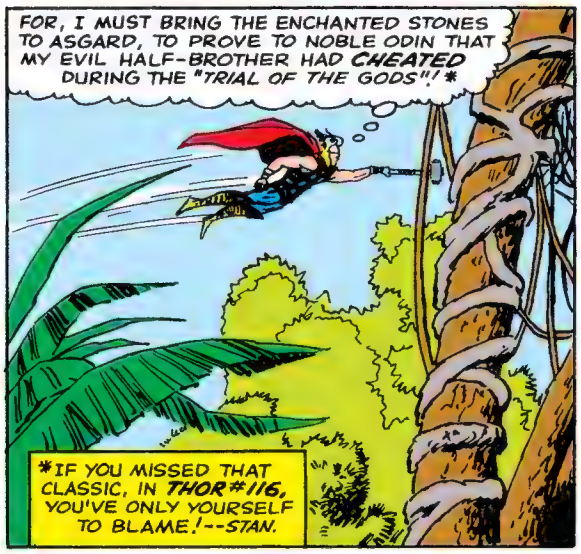
A STORY STEEPED IN SPLENDOR BY... STAN LEE

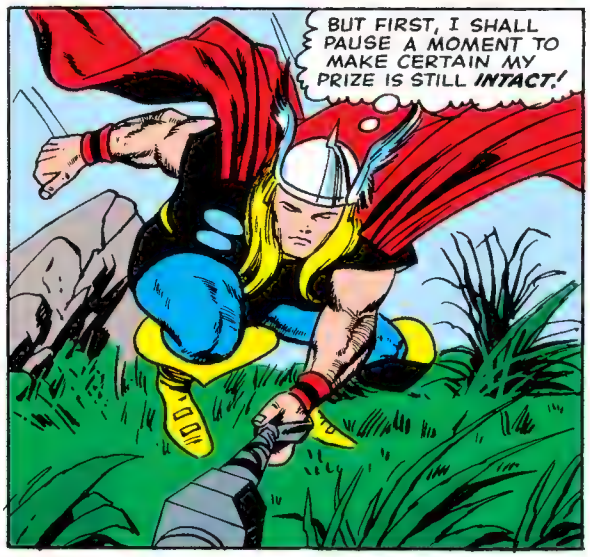
ARTWORK BATHED IN BEAUTY BY.... JACK KIRBY

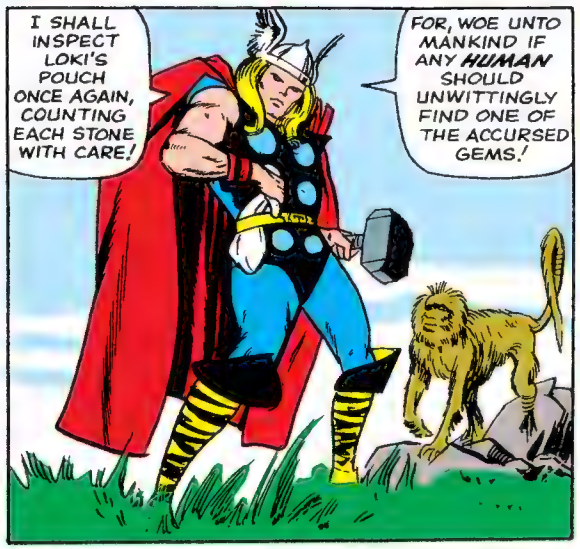
INKING DIPPED IN DRAMA BY..... VINCE COLLETTA

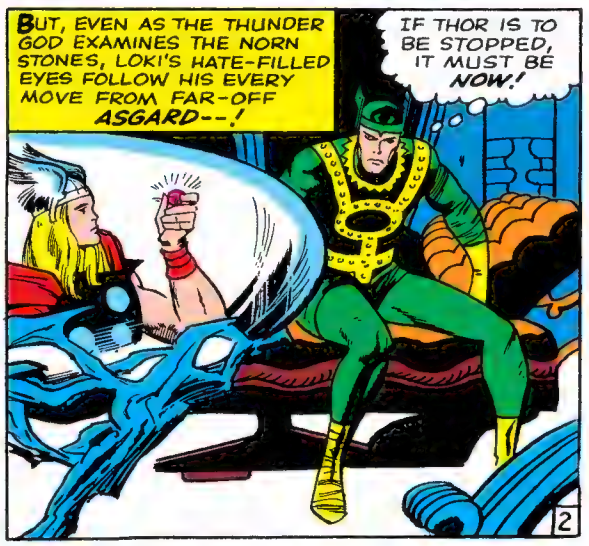
LETTERING COUCHED IN CLICHÉS BY... ARTIE SIMEK


HE--HE LEFT THE GIRL WITH US, AND TOOK OFF AGAIN WITHOUT A WORD!
THE GIRL WILL BE BROUGHT TO SAFETY NOW!
AND SO, I NEED TARRY NO LONGER ABOVE THIS DESOLATE BATTLEFIELD!
THEN, WE'RE NOT SEEIN' THINGS! IT REALLY IS THOR HIMSELF!
IT IS TRULY THOR--THE ONE WHO SAVED MY LIFE!


FOR, I MUST BRING THE ENCHANTED STONES TO ASGARD, TO PROVE TO NOBLE ODIN THAT MY EVIL HALF-BROTHER HAD CHEATED DURING THE "TRIAL OF THE GODS"! *
*IF YOU MISSED THAT CLASSIC, IN THOR #116, YOU'VE ONLY YOURSELF TO BLAME!--STAN.

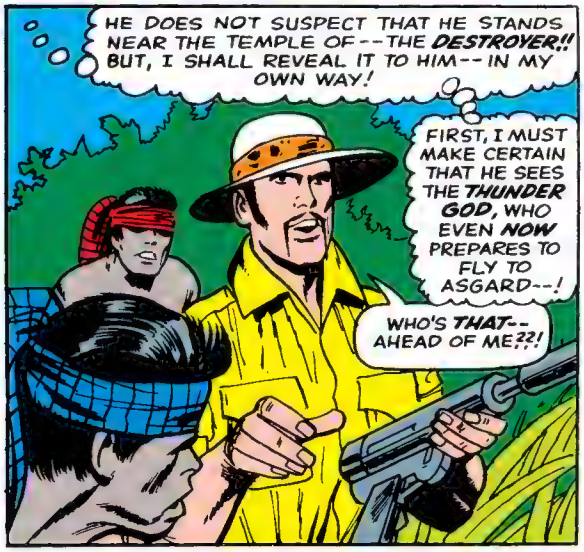

BUT FIRST, I SHALL PAUSE A MOMENT TO MAKE CERTAIN MY PRIZE IS STILL INTACT!

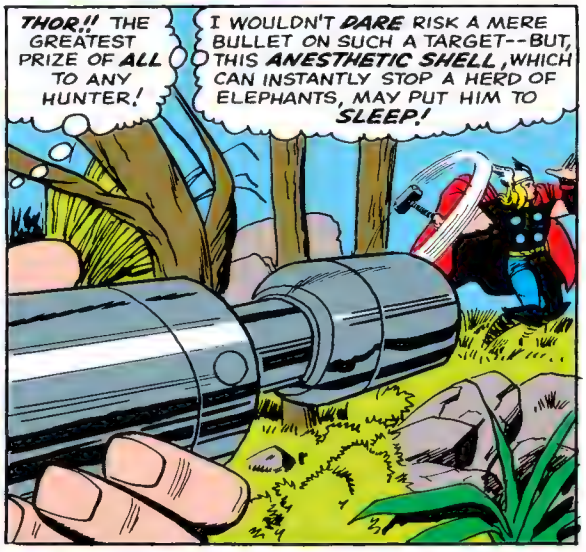

I SHALL INSPECT LOKI'S POUCH ONCE AGAIN, COUNTING EACH STONE WITH CARE!
FOR, WOE UNTO MANKIND IF ANY HUMAN SHOULD UNWITTINGLY FIND ONE OF THE ACCURSED GEMS!

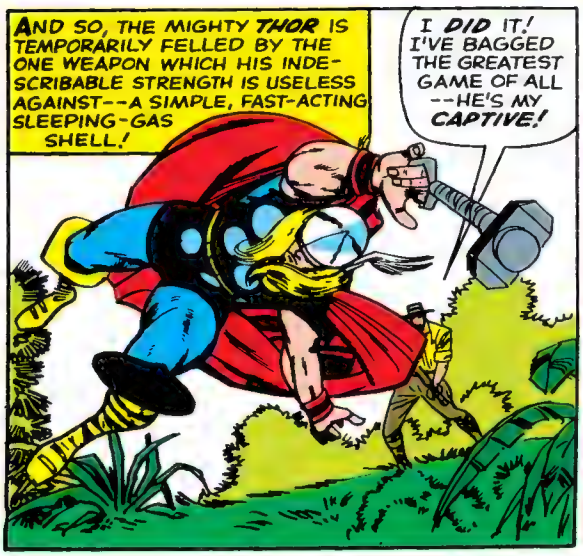

BUT, EVEN AS THE THUNDER GOD EXAMINES THE NORN STONES, LOKI'S HATE-FILLED EYES FOLLOW HIS EVERY MOVE FROM FAR-OFF ASGARD--!
IF THOR IS TO BE STOPPED, IT MUST BE NOW!

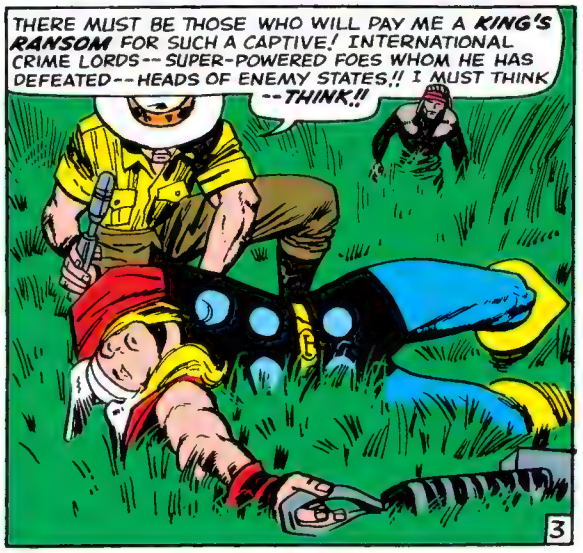
ONCE HE REACHES ASGARD, IT WILL BE TOO LATE FOR ME! THOR WILL HAVE WON!
I MUST FIND A WAY TO DEFEAT HIM BEFORE HE LEAVES EARTH! AND FIND IT I SHALL!

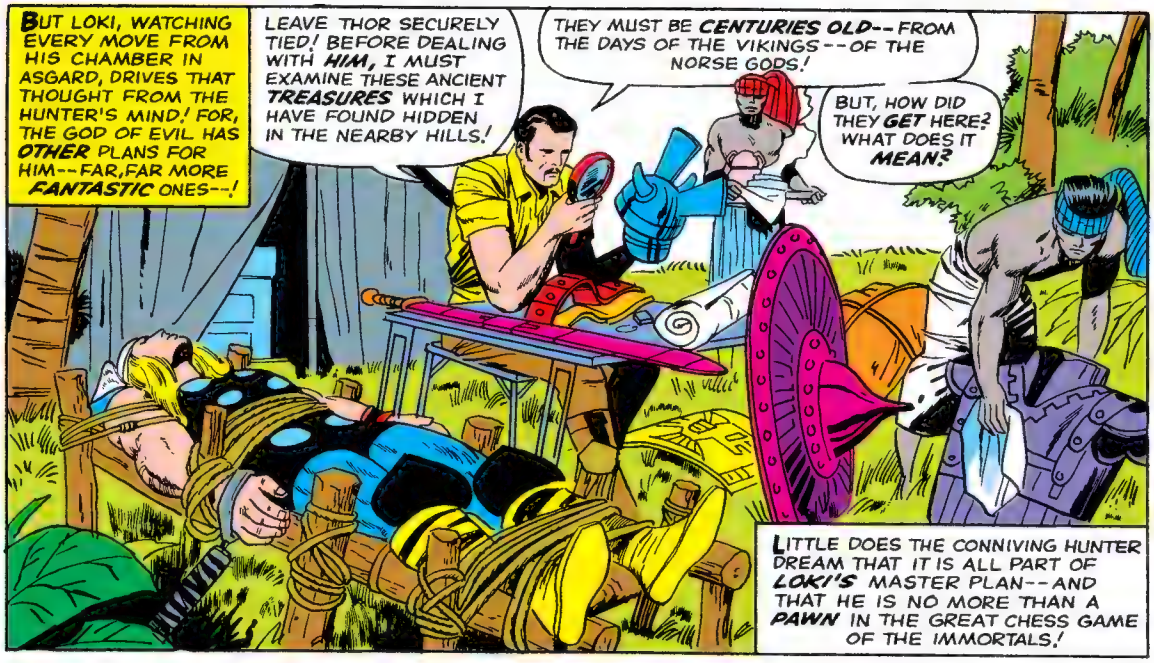
EVEN NOW MY BRAIN FORMS A SCHEME--SO CUNNING, SO CLEVER, THAT ONLY LOKI COULD HAVE CONCEIVED IT!
NOT FAR FROM THOR IS A RENEGADE HUNTER! HIS HEART IS FILLED WITH GREED--HE IS MY MAN!


HE DOES NOT SUSPECT THAT HE STANDS NEAR THE TEMPLE OF--THE DESTROYER!! BUT, I SHALL REVEAL IT TO HIM--IN MY OWN WAY!
FIRST, I MUST MAKE CERTAIN THAT HE SEES THE THUNDER GOD, WHO EVEN NOW PREPARES TO FLY TO ASGARD--!
WHO'S THAT--AHEAD OF ME?!?!


THOR!! THE GREATEST PRIZE OF ALL TO ANY HUNTER!
I WOULDN'T DARE RISK A MERE BULLET ON SUCH A TARGET--BUT, THIS ANESTHETIC SHELL, WHICH CAN INSTANTLY STOP A HERD OF ELEPHANTS, MAY PUT HIM TO SLEEP!


AND SO, THE MIGHTY THOR IS TEMPORARILY FELLED BY THE ONE WEAPON WHICH HIS INDESCRIBABLE STRENGTH IS USELESS AGAINST--A SIMPLE, FAST-ACTING SLEEPING-GAS SHELL!
I DID IT! I'VE BAGGED THE GREATEST GAME OF ALL--HE'S MY CAPTIVE!

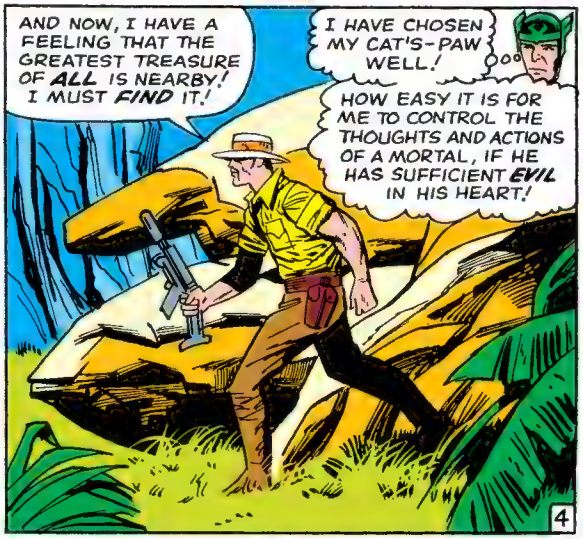

THERE MUST BE THOSE WHO WILL PAY ME A KING'S RANSOM FOR SUCH A CAPTIVE! INTERNATIONAL CRIME LORDS--SUPER-POWERED FOES WHOM HE HAS DEFEATED--HEADS OF ENEMY STATES!! I MUST THINK--THINK!!

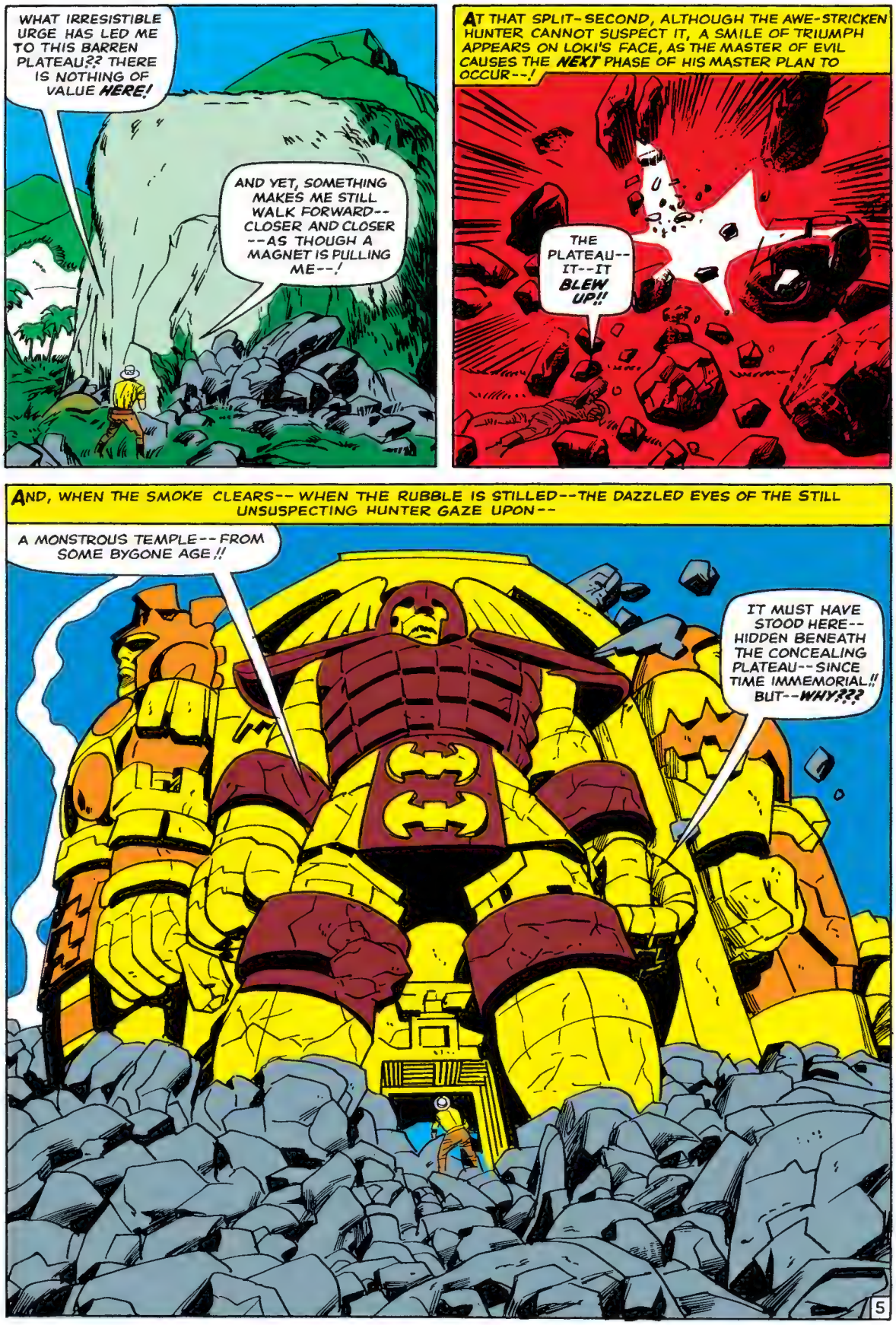

BUT LOKI, WATCHING EVERY MOVE FROM HIS CHAMBER IN ASGARD, DRIVES THAT THOUGHT FROM THE HUNTER'S MIND! FOR, THE GOD OF EVIL HAS OTHER PLANS FOR HIM--FAR, FAR MORE FANTASTIC ONES--!
LEAVE THOR SECURELY TIED! BEFORE DEALING WITH HIM, I MUST EXAMINE THESE ANCIENT TREASURES WHICH I HAVE FOUND HIDDEN IN THE NEARBY HILLS!
THEY MUST BE CENTURIES OLD--FROM THE DAYS OF THE VIKINGS--OF THE NORSE GODS!
BUT, HOW DID THEY GET HERE? WHAT DOES IT MEAN?
LITTLE DOES THE CONNIVING HUNTER DREAM THAT IT IS ALL PART OF LOKI'S MASTER PLAN--AND THAT HE IS NO MORE THAN A PAWN IN THE GREAT CHESS GAME OF THE IMMORTALS!

I'VE BEEN A FOOL TO HUNT FOR MERE GAME, WHEN TREASURES SUCH AS THIS ARE HIDDEN IN THE JUNGLE!
BUT, MASTER--THOSE OBJECTS WERE NOT THERE EARLIER TODAY! WE KNOW, FOR WE HAVE SEARCHED THESE HILLS!
HOLD YOUR TONGUES!

ARE YOU TRYING TO TELL ME THERE IS SOME MAGIC INVOLVED?? SOME SUPERSTITIOUS MUMBO-JUMBO? THEY CAME FROM NOWHERE??
YOUR PARDON, MASTER--WE DO NOT KNOW THE ANSWER! BUT THESE OBJECTS REEK OF EVIL--OF DANGER--!

YOU COWARD!!
BACK TO YOUR DUTIES! SO LONG AS I PAY YOU, YOU'LL SERVE ME AND NEVER QUESTION!


AND NOW, I HAVE A FEELING THAT THE GREATEST TREASURE OF ALL IS NEARBY! I MUST FIND IT!
I HAVE CHOSEN MY CAT'S-PAW WELL!
HOW EASY IT IS FOR ME TO CONTROL THE THOUGHTS AND ACTIONS OF A MORTAL, IF HE HAS SUFFICIENT EVIL IN HIS HEART!


WHAT IRRESISTIBLE URGE HAS LED ME TO THIS BARREN PLATEAU?? THERE IS NOTHING OF VALUE HERE!
AND YET, SOMETHING MAKES ME STILL WALK FORWARD--CLOSER AND CLOSER --AS THOUGH A MAGNET IS PULLING ME--!
AT THAT SPLIT-SECOND, ALTHOUGH THE AWE-STRICKEN HUNTER CANNOT SUSPECT IT, A SMILE OF TRIUMPH APPEARS ON LOKI'S FACE, AS THE MASTER OF EVIL CAUSES THE NEXT PHASE OF HIS MASTER PLAN TO OCCUR--!
THE PLATEAU--IT--IT BLEW UP!!
AND, WHEN THE SMOKE CLEARS-- WHEN THE RUBBLE IS STILLED--THE DAZZLED EYES OF THE STILL UNSUSPECTING HUNTER GAZE UPON--
A MONSTROUS TEMPLE--FROM SOME BYGONE AGE!!
IT MUST HAVE STOOD HERE--HIDDEN BENEATH THE CONCEALING PLATEAU--SINCE TIME IMMEMORIAL!! BUT--WHY???

THEN, WITH TREMULOUS TREAD, UNABLE TO RESIST THE EERIE ATTRACTION WHICH DRAWS HIM CLOSER AND CLOSER--THE HUNTER **ENTERS** THE SILENT SEPULCHER--

I **MUST** LEARN WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT!! SOMETHING SEEMS TO BE DRAWING ME--SOME STRANGE FORCE THAT I'M HELPLESS TO RESIST--!

SUDDENLY, I SEEM TO REMEMBER --AN ANCIENT LEGEND --ALMOST LOST IN THE FORGOTTEN PAST--THE LEGEND OF A HIDDEN MONSTER WHICH HAS BEEN WAITING FOR AGES--A MONSTER CALLED --THE **DESTROYER!**

AND, REACHING THE INNERMOST RECESS OF THE SHADOW-FILLED STRUCTURE, HE REALIZES BEYOND ALL DOUBT, BEYOND ALL QUESTION, THAT THE LEGEND IS **TRUE!!**

THE **DESTROYER!** IN THE NAME OF SANITY, WHAT HAVE I STUMBLED INTO--???

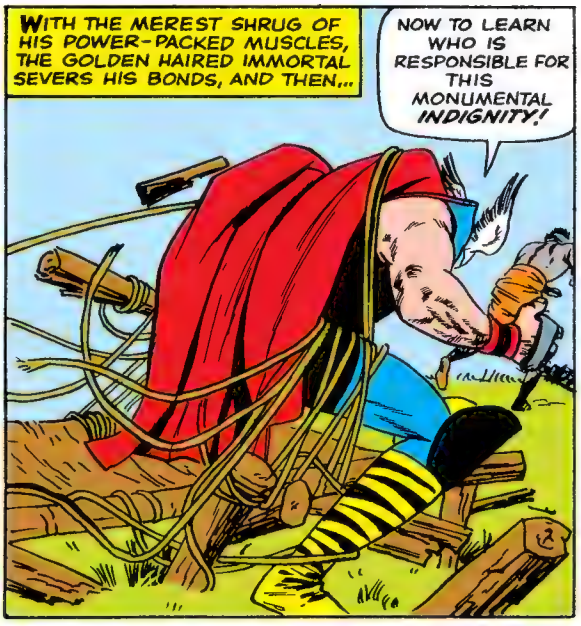
AT THAT EXACT INSTANT OF TIME, A TRIUMPHANT VOICE SPANS THE ENDLESS VOID BETWEEN ASGARD AND EARTH--THE SNARLING, SCREETCHING, STUPIFYING VOICE OF--**LOKI!!**

IT IS **DONE!** THE TRAP IS **SET!** ONCE AGAIN, THE **DESTROYER** SHALL ROAM THE EARTH--GUIDED BY THE BRAIN OF A HAPLESS, EVIL HUMAN!

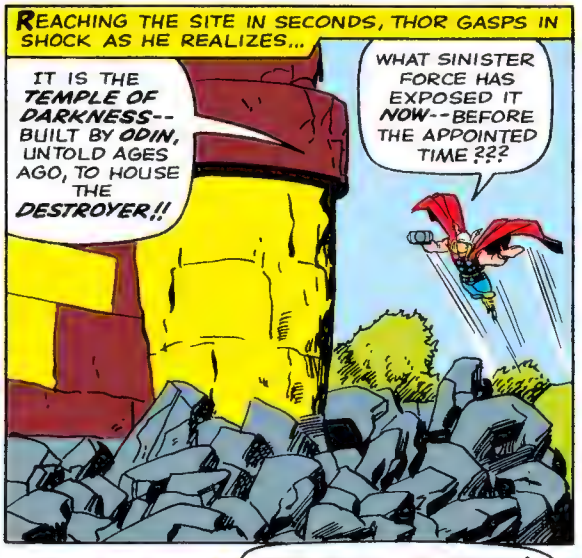
THE **DESTROYER**-- HE WHO HAS THE POWER TO DESTROY THE **THUNDER GOD** HIMSELF!

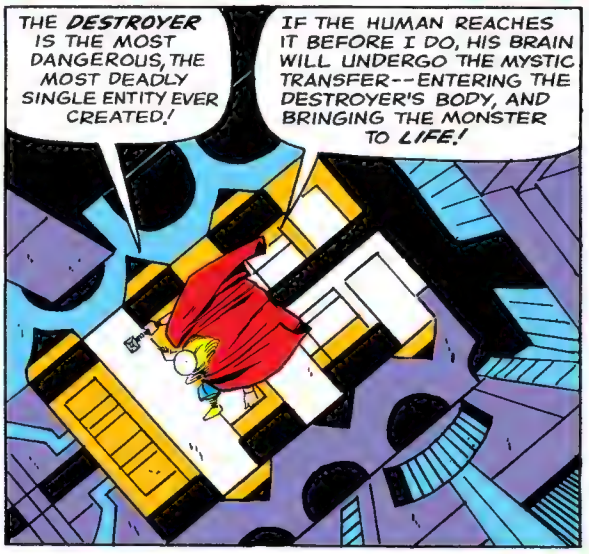
MEANWHILE, THE SLEEPING GAS HAVING FINALLY WORN OFF, THE MIGHTY **THOR** AWAKENS!!

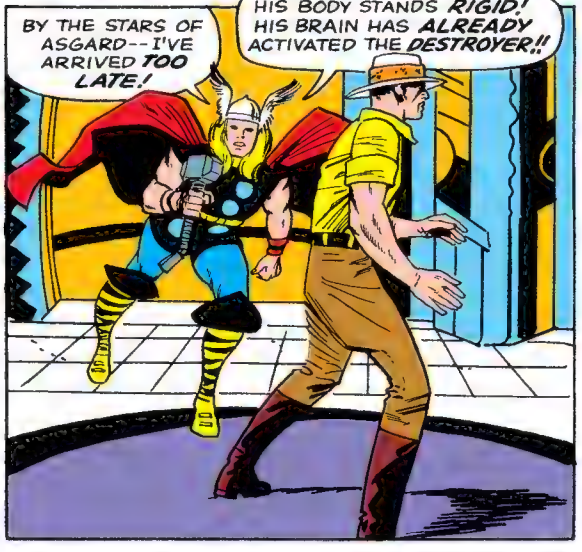
WHAT IS **THIS??** THE SON OF **ODIN,** BOUND AND FETTERED LIKE A HEAD OF **CATTLE!!**

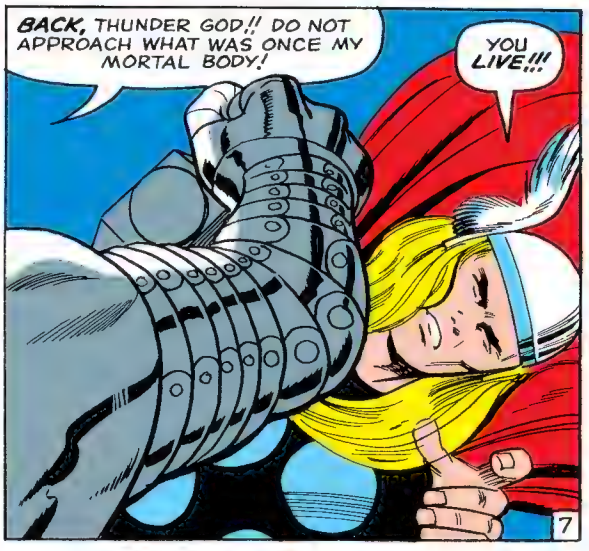

WITH THE MEREST SHRUG OF HIS POWER-PACKED MUSCLES, THE GOLDEN HAIRED IMMORTAL SEVERS HIS BONDS, AND THEN...
NOW TO LEARN WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS MONUMENTAL INDIGNITY!

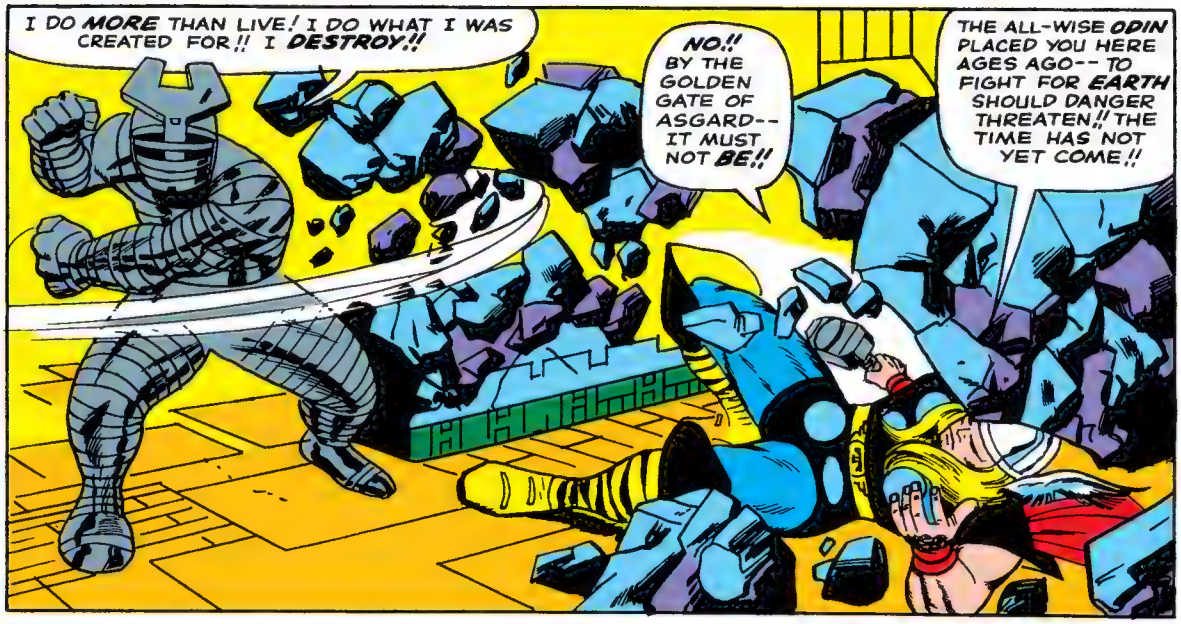
DO NOT SLAY US, MAN WITH LIMBS OF STEEL! IT WAS THE HUNTER WHO BADE US SHACKLE YOU!
HE HAS RUN OFF, TOWARDS THE PLATEAU OF SILENCE!
THEN THOR SHALL FOLLOW!
FEAR NOT! NO HARM SHALL COME TO THE INNOCENT!

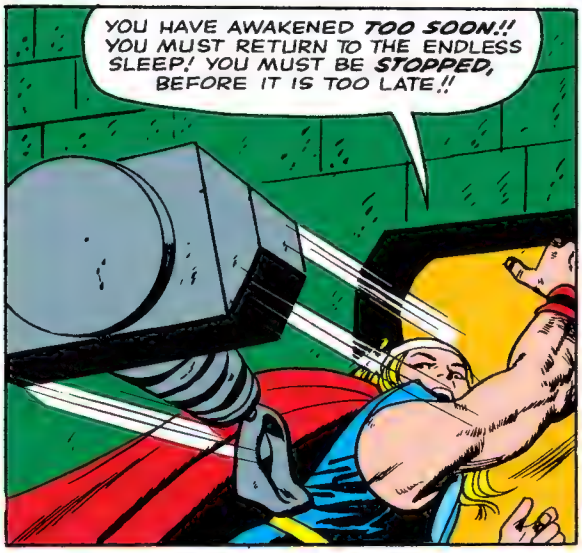

REACHING THE SITE IN SECONDS, THOR GASPS IN SHOCK AS HE REALIZES...
IT IS THE TEMPLE OF DARKNESS-- BUILT BY ODIN, UNTOLD AGES AGO, TO HOUSE THE DESTROYER!!
WHAT SINISTER FORCE HAS EXPOSED IT NOW--BEFORE THE APPOINTED TIME???

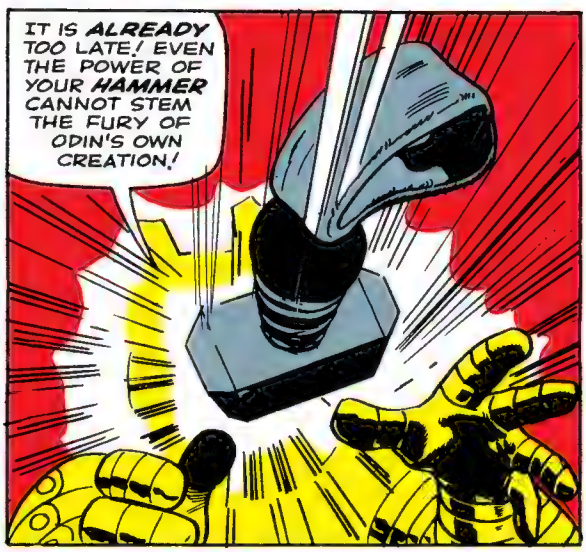

THE DESTROYER IS THE MOST DANGEROUS, THE MOST DEADLY SINGLE ENTITY EVER CREATED!
IF THE HUMAN REACHES IT BEFORE I DO, HIS BRAIN WILL UNDERGO THE MYSTIC TRANSFER--ENTERING THE DESTROYER'S BODY, AND BRINGING THE MONSTER TO LIFE!

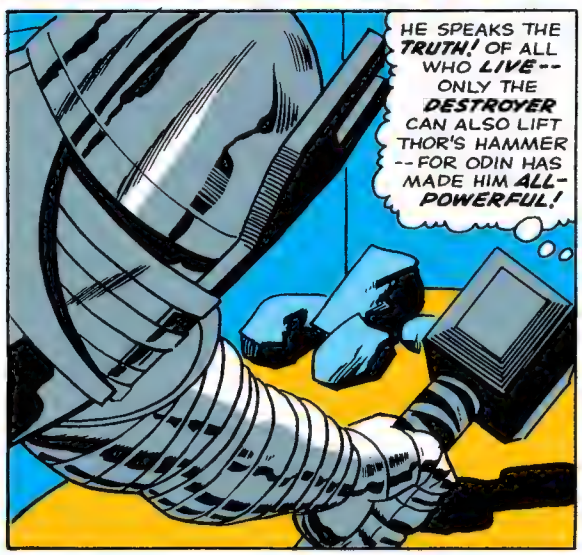

BY THE STARS OF ASGARD--I'VE ARRIVED TOO LATE!
HIS BODY STANDS RIGID! HIS BRAIN HAS ALREADY ACTIVATED THE DESTROYER!!


BACK, THUNDER GOD!! DO NOT APPROACH WHAT WAS ONCE MY MORTAL BODY!
YOU LIVE!!!

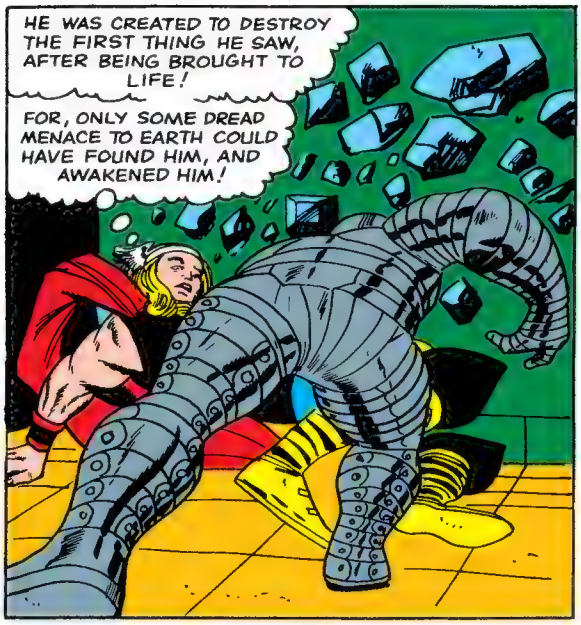

I DO MORE THAN LIVE! I DO WHAT I WAS CREATED FOR!! I DESTROY!!
NO!! BY THE GOLDEN GATE OF ASGARD-- IT MUST NOT BE!!
THE ALL-WISE ODIN PLACED YOU HERE AGES AGO-- TO FIGHT FOR EARTH SHOULD DANGER THREATEN!! THE TIME HAS NOT YET COME!!


YOU HAVE AWAKENED TOO SOON!! YOU MUST RETURN TO THE ENDLESS SLEEP! YOU MUST BE STOPPED, BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE!!

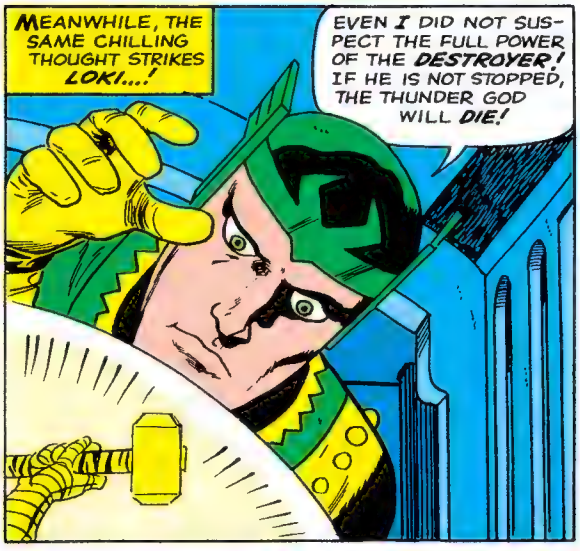

IT IS ALREADY TOO LATE! EVEN THE POWER OF YOUR HAMMER CANNOT STEM THE FURY OF ODIN'S OWN CREATION!

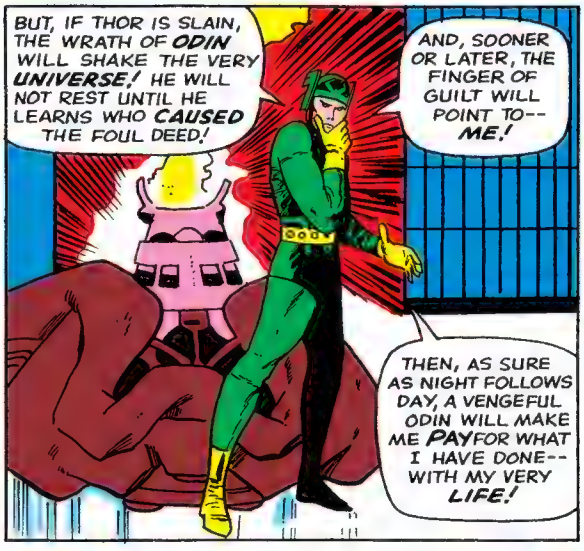

HE SPEAKS THE TRUTH! OF ALL WHO LIVE-- ONLY THE DESTROYER CAN ALSO LIFT THOR'S HAMMER -- FOR ODIN HAS MADE HIM ALL-POWERFUL!

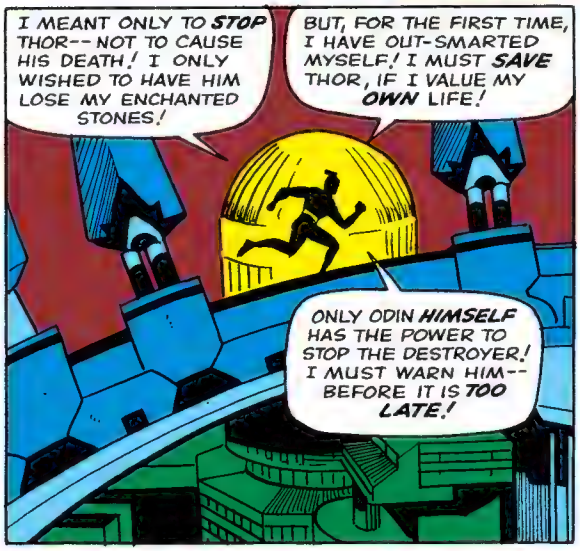
IF I AM DEFEATED, ALL OF EARTH WILL BE HELPLESS BEFORE HIM!! YET, HOW CAN I TRIUMPH OVER HE WHOM ODIN MADE UNBEATABLE?!?!


HE WAS CREATED TO DESTROY THE FIRST THING HE SAW, AFTER BEING BROUGHT TO LIFE!
FOR, ONLY SOME DREAD MENACE TO EARTH COULD HAVE FOUND HIM, AND AWAKENED HIM!

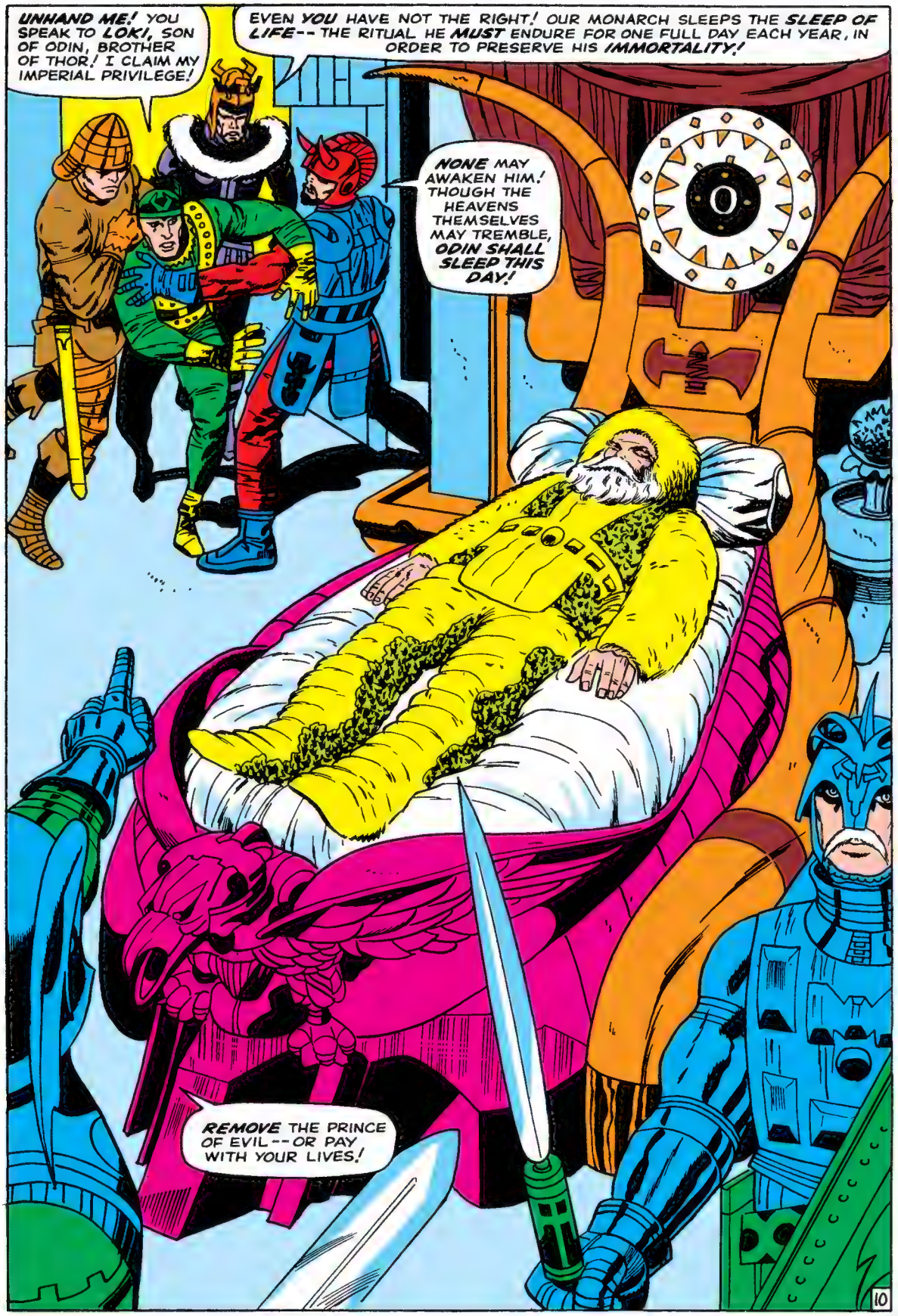
BUT, THAT UNWITTING HUNTER HAS AWAKENED HIM TOO SOON--I AM THE FIRST ONE HE HAS SEEN!! HE WILL NEVER REST UNTIL I AM VANQUISHED...
AND, BY DECREE OF IMPERIAL ODIN, HE HAS THE POWER TO SLAY ME!

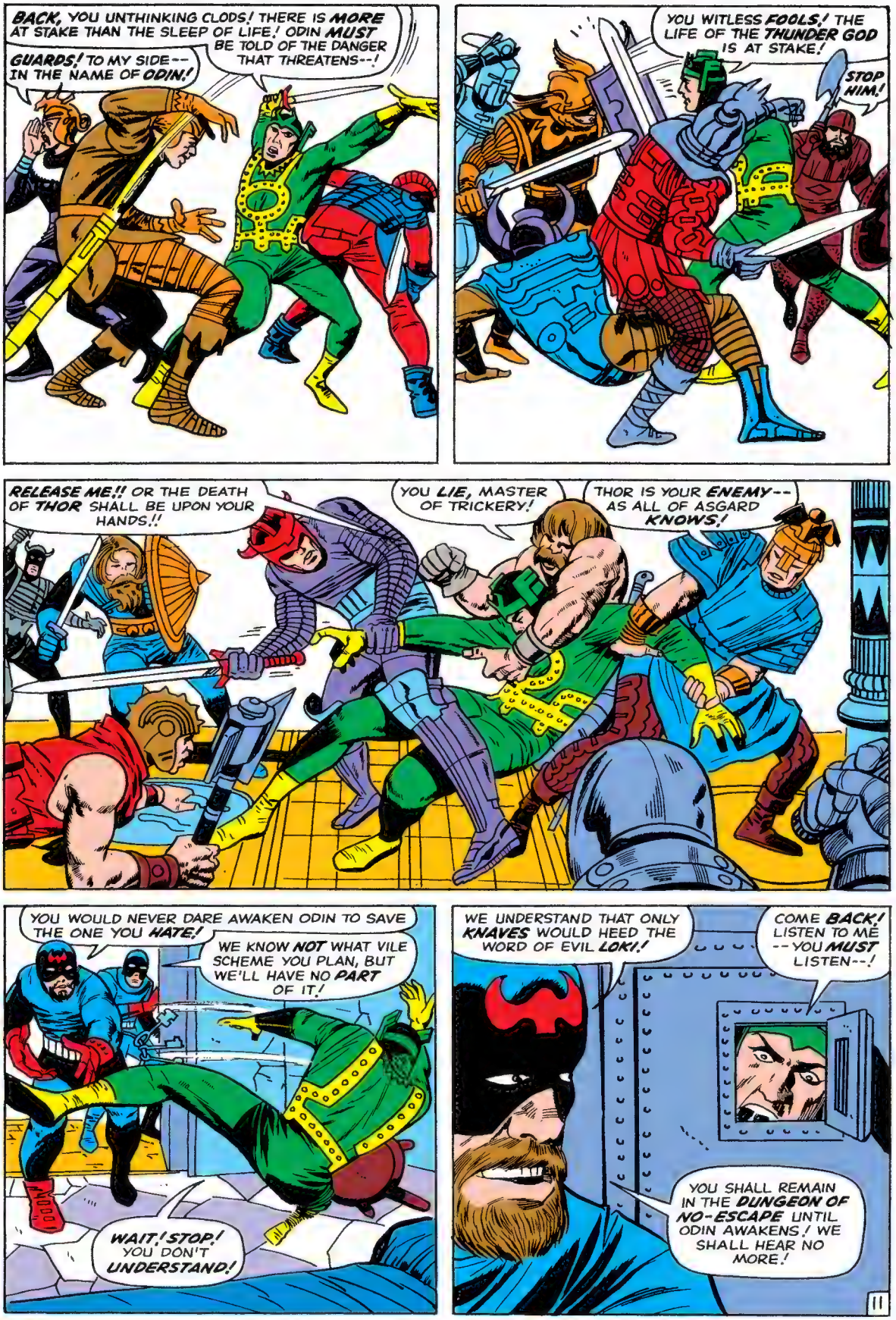

MEANWHILE, THE SAME CHILLING THOUGHT STRIKES LOKI...!
EVEN I DID NOT SUSPECT THE FULL POWER OF THE DESTROYER! IF HE IS NOT STOPPED, THE THUNDER GOD WILL DIE!


BUT, IF THOR IS SLAIN, THE WRATH OF ODIN WILL SHAKE THE VERY UNIVERSE! HE WILL NOT REST UNTIL HE LEARNS WHO CAUSED THE FOUL DEED!
AND, SOONER OR LATER, THE FINGER OF GUILT WILL POINT TO--ME!
THEN, AS SURE AS NIGHT FOLLOWS DAY, A VENGEFUL ODIN WILL MAKE ME PAY FOR WHAT I HAVE DONE--WITH MY VERY LIFE!


I MEANT ONLY TO STOP THOR--NOT TO CAUSE HIS DEATH! I ONLY WISHED TO HAVE HIM LOSE MY ENCHANTED STONES!
BUT, FOR THE FIRST TIME, I HAVE OUT-SMARTED MYSELF! I MUST SAVE THOR, IF I VALUE MY OWN LIFE!
ONLY ODIN HIMSELF HAS THE POWER TO STOP THE DESTROYER! I MUST WARN HIM--BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE!

GUARDS! STAND ASIDE! I MUST HAVE IMMEDIATE AUDIENCE WITH REGAL ODIN!
IT IS FORBIDDEN! NONE MAY ENTER!

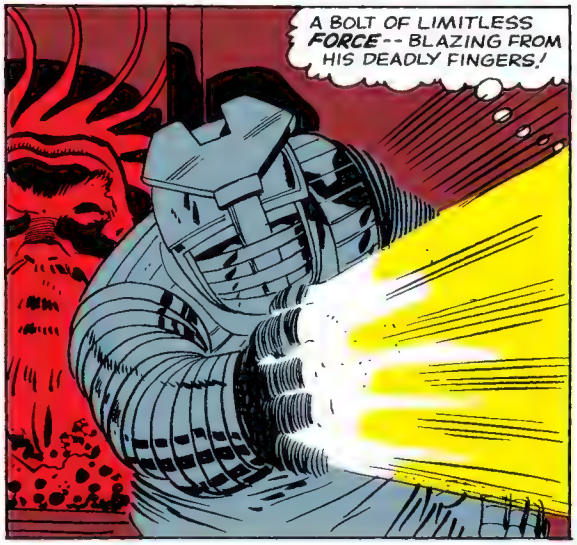

UNHAND ME! YOU SPEAK TO LOKI, SON OF ODIN, BROTHER OF THOR! I CLAIM MY IMPERIAL PRIVILEGE!
EVEN YOU HAVE NOT THE RIGHT! OUR MONARCH SLEEPS THE SLEEP OF LIFE -- THE RITUAL HE MUST ENDURE FOR ONE FULL DAY EACH YEAR, IN ORDER TO PRESERVE HIS IMMORTALITY!
NONE MAY AWAKEN HIM! THOUGH THE HEAVENS THEMSELVES MAY TREMBLE, ODIN SHALL SLEEP THIS DAY!
REMOVE THE PRINCE OF EVIL -- OR PAY WITH YOUR LIVES!

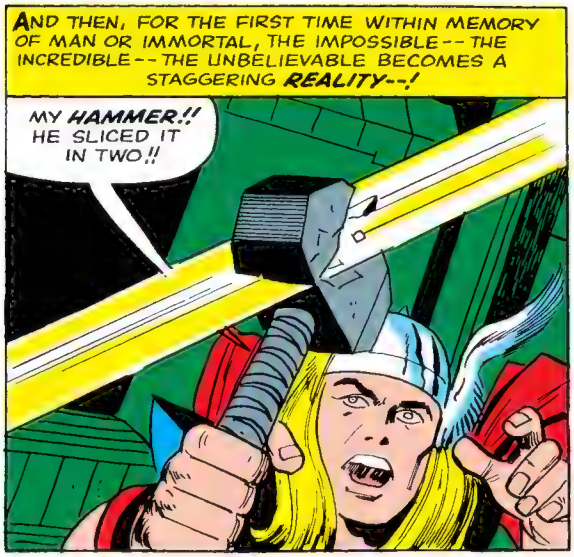

BACK, YOU UNTHINKING CLODS! THERE IS MORE AT STAKE THAN THE SLEEP OF LIFE! ODIN MUST BE TOLD OF THE DANGER THAT THREATENS--!
GUARDS! TO MY SIDE--IN THE NAME OF ODIN!
YOU WITLESS FOOLS! THE LIFE OF THE THUNDER GOD IS AT STAKE!
STOP HIM!
RELEASE ME!! OR THE DEATH OF THOR SHALL BE UPON YOUR HANDS!!
YOU LIE, MASTER OF TRICKERY!
THOR IS YOUR ENEMY--AS ALL OF ASGARD KNOWS!
YOU WOULD NEVER DARE AWAKEN ODIN TO SAVE THE ONE YOU HATE!
WE KNOW NOT WHAT VILE SCHEME YOU PLAN, BUT WE'LL HAVE NO PART OF IT!
WAIT! STOP! YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND!
WE UNDERSTAND THAT ONLY KNAVES WOULD HEED THE WORD OF EVIL LOKI!
COME BACK! LISTEN TO ME--YOU MUST LISTEN--!
YOU SHALL REMAIN IN THE DUNGEON OF NO-ESCAPE UNTIL ODIN AWAKENS! WE SHALL HEAR NO MORE!
11

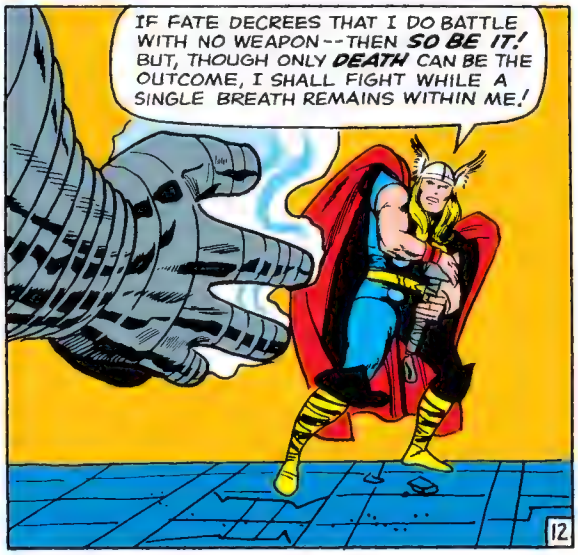
MEANWHILE, A WORLD AWAY, THE INCREDIBLE BATTLE CONTINUES TO RAGE...
NEVER BEFORE HAVE I FACED THE DEADLY ONSLAUGHT OF MY OWN HAMMER!

BUT, LUCKILY, THE AIM OF THE DESTROYER IS NOT YET THE EQUAL OF THOR'S!
I MUST REGAIN MY MALLET BEFORE HE STRIKES AGAIN!

IT IS MINE AGAIN!! BUT-- HOLD--!!
THE VERY GROUND SHAKES BENEATH MY FEET! WHAT NEW ATTACK DOES THE INVINCIBLE ONE LAUNCH?


A BOLT OF LIMITLESS FORCE-- BLAZING FROM HIS DEADLY FINGERS!

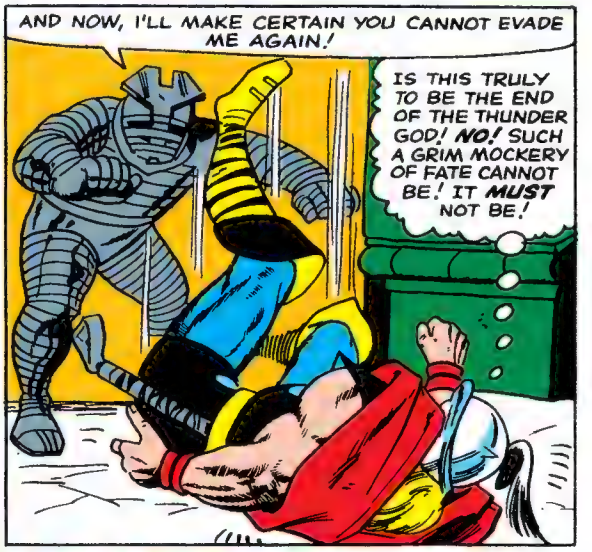

AND THEN, FOR THE FIRST TIME WITHIN MEMORY OF MAN OR IMMORTAL, THE IMPOSSIBLE-- THE INCREDIBLE-- THE UNBELIEVABLE BECOMES A STAGGERING REALITY--!
MY HAMMER!! HE SLICED IT IN TWO!!

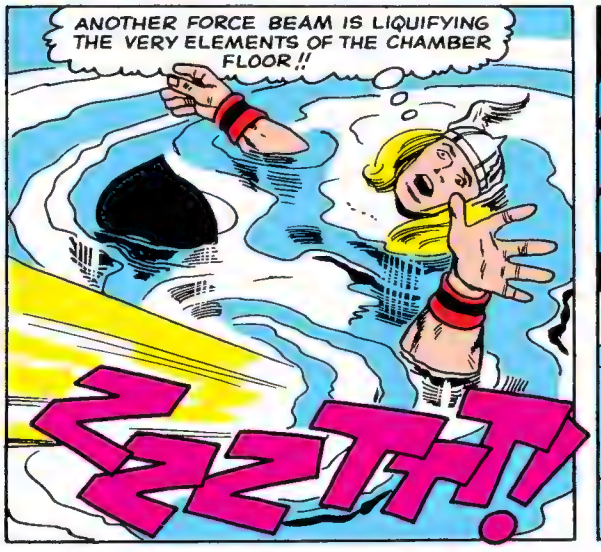

IF FATE DECREES THAT I DO BATTLE WITH NO WEAPON--THEN SO BE IT! BUT, THOUGH ONLY DEATH CAN BE THE OUTCOME, I SHALL FIGHT WHILE A SINGLE BREATH REMAINS WITHIN ME!

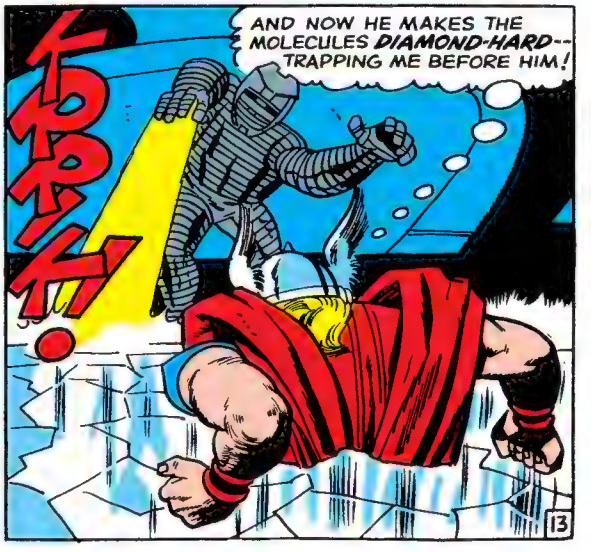
BUT WAIT! I AM NOT WEAPONLESS! I HAVE THE STONES OF LOKI!

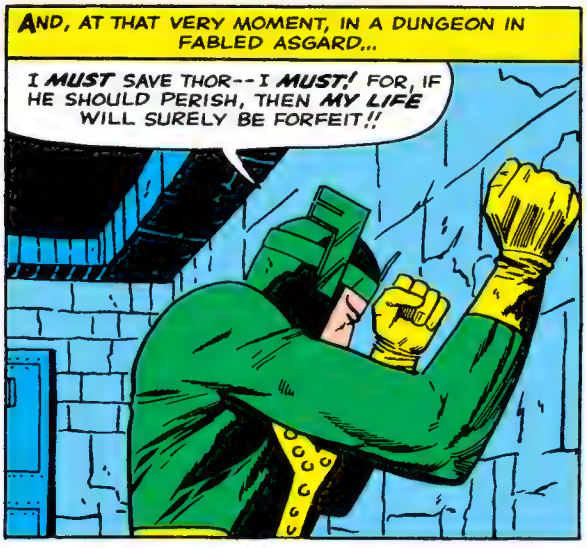
AND WITH THESE ENCHANTED STONES, THE POWER OF LEVITATION IS MINE!
FLOATING OUT OF REACH CANNOT SAVE YOU FROM THE DESTROYER! FOR I POSSESS EVERY FORCE IN THE UNIVERSE!

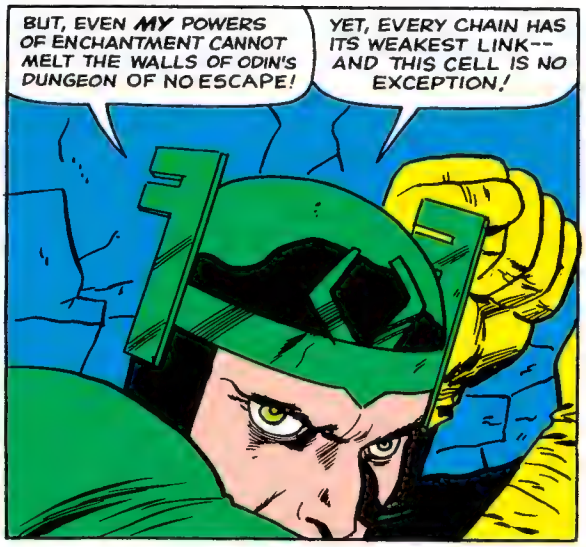
HE SPEAKS TRUE! ODIN DESIGNED HIM TO BE UNBEATABLE!
A SIMPLE MAGNETIC FORCE WILL BRING YOU TO ME WITHIN SECONDS!

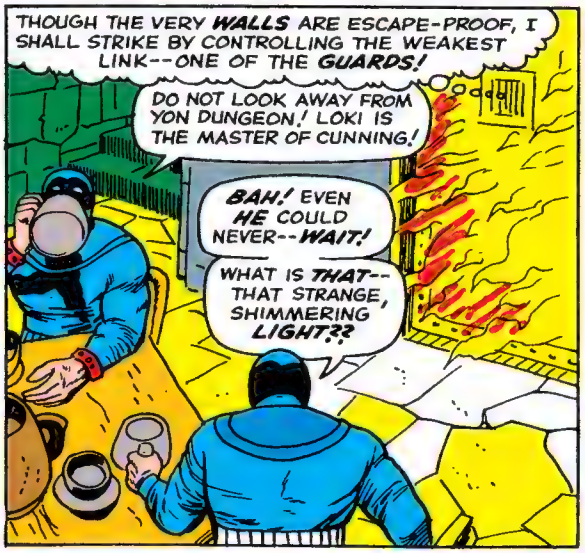

AND NOW, I'LL MAKE CERTAIN YOU CANNOT EVADE ME AGAIN!
IS THIS TRULY TO BE THE END OF THE THUNDER GOD! NO! SUCH A GRIM MOCKERY OF FATE CANNOT BE! IT MUST NOT BE!


ANOTHER FORCE BEAM IS LIQUIFYING THE VERY ELEMENTS OF THE CHAMBER FLOOR!!
ZZZT-T!


AND NOW HE MAKES THE MOLECULES DIAMOND-HARD--TRAPPING ME BEFORE HIM!
KRAK!


AND, AT THAT VERY MOMENT, IN A DUNGEON IN FABLED ASGARD...
I MUST SAVE THOR--I MUST! FOR, IF HE SHOULD PERISH, THEN MY LIFE WILL SURELY BE FORFEIT!!


BUT, EVEN MY POWERS OF ENCHANTMENT CANNOT MELT THE WALLS OF ODIN'S DUNGEON OF NO ESCAPE!
YET, EVERY CHAIN HAS ITS WEAKEST LINK--AND THIS CELL IS NO EXCEPTION!


THOUGH THE VERY WALLS ARE ESCAPE-PROOF, I SHALL STRIKE BY CONTROLLING THE WEAKEST LINK--ONE OF THE GUARDS!
DO NOT LOOK AWAY FROM YON DUNGEON! LOKI IS THE MASTER OF CUNNING!
BAH! EVEN HE COULD NEVER--WAIT!
WHAT IS THAT--THAT STRANGE, SHIMMERING LIGHT??

IT IS A TRICK!! AVERT YOUR EYES! DO NOT LOOK AT IT!!
TOO LATE! IT DAZZLES MY SENSES! MY MIND GROWS BLANK--!

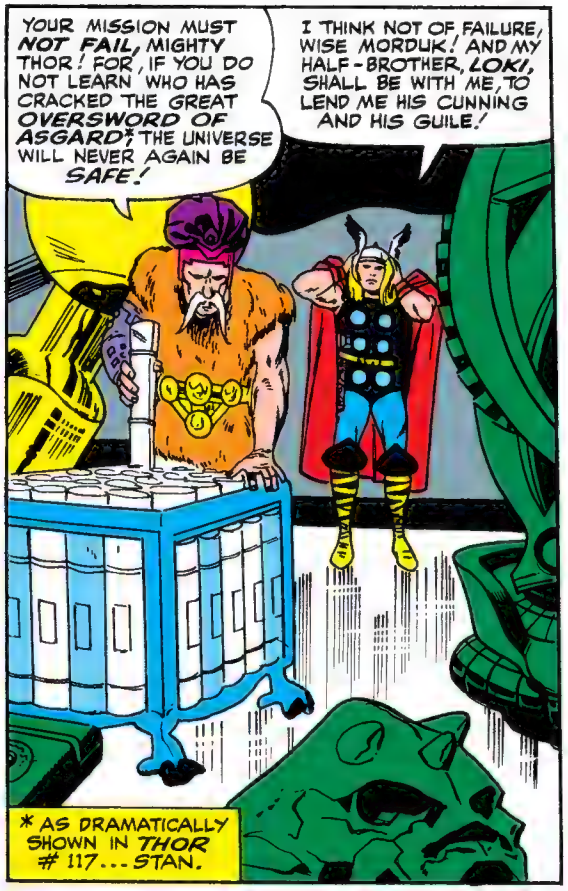
NONE BUT LOKI COULD HAVE CONCEIVED SUCH A PLAN!
I--MUST--FREE--THE--PRISONER!

BUT, EVEN THE GOD OF EVIL CAN FAIL! HIS HYPNOTIC LIGHT ONLY TRAPPED THE ONE OF US--I WAS ABLE TO RESIST--AND STRIKE BACK!
UNHHHH--!

NOW BACK, THOU PRINCE OF KNAVES!!
FOOL THAT I AM!! I WAS UNFORGIVEABLY CARELESS! THERE WERE TWO OF THEM!
YOU SHALL REMAIN SHACKLED HERE TILL ODIN DOTH AWAKE!
BUT--THAT WILL BE TOO LATE--!! CAN'T YOU SEE--??
IT'S USELESS! THERE IS NO MORE I CAN DO! THESE SHACKLES WERE FORGED BY COMMAND OF ODIN HIMSELF!
I CANNOT ESCAPE TO AWAKEN THE ALL-WISE ONE! THUS, THE THUNDER GOD WILL SURELY MEET HIS DOOM AT THE HANDS OF THE INVINCIBLE DESTROYER!
AND, THE SLAYING OF THOR IS CERTAIN TO SOUND MY OWN DEATH KNELL! FOR THE FIRST TIME, LOKI HAS ENTRAPPED HIMSELF!
NOTHING CAN SAVE THE SONS OF ODIN! THE TWO OF US ARE --DOOMED!
BUT, MIGHTY THOR IS MADE OF STERNER STUFF THAN HIS WICKED HALF-BROTHER! FOR, THE INDOMITABLE FIGHTING SPIRIT OF THE THUNDER GOD CAN NEVER BE CRUSHED--NOT WHILST THE SLIMMEST SHRED OF LIFE REMAINS....!
YOU STRUGGLE IN VAIN! NO POWER IN THE UNIVERSE CAN LOOSEN THOSE MOLECULES ONCE THEY HAVE BEEN HONED TO THE HARDNESS OF ASGARDIAN DIAMONDS!
NO STRUGGLE IS EVER IN VAIN!! IT IS ONLY BASE SURRENDER WHICH LEADS DOWN THE PATH OF FAILURE AND DESPAIR!

STAY THEN, AND CONTINUE WITH YOUR FUTILE EFFORTS! EACH PASSING MOMENT WILL MAKE YOU EVER WEAKER!
MEANTIME, I SHALL INSPECT MY MORTAL BODY-- FOR NO HARM MUST EVER BE PERMITTED TO BEFALL IT!
WHEN MY MISSION OF DESTRUCTION IS COMPLETED--THE MISSION I WAS CREATED TO PERFORM--I MUST RETURN TO THIS FRAIL, HUMAN SHELL!
BUT, UNTIL THAT MOMENT, I REMAIN THE DESTROYER--MOST POWERFUL FORCE OF ANNIHILATION IN ALL THE WORLD!
AND NOW, I MUST FULFILL THE TASK WHICH DESTINY HAS ASSIGNED TO ME!
FAREWELL, GOD OF THUNDER--YOUR FINAL MOMENT IS AT HAND!
HE HAS UNLEASHED A BOLT OF ELEMENTAL DESTRUCTIVE POWER--AGAINST WHICH NOTHING CAN ENDURE!
IT COMES CLOSER BY THE SECOND! WHEN IT TOUCHES ME, I'LL BE TRANSFORMED INTO ANOTHER ELEMENT--IT SHALL BE THE END OF MIGHTY THOR!
BUT, THOUGH WE HAVE REACHED THE FINISH OF THIS MONTH'S TITANIC TALE, THERE IS MORE TO COME!! BY THE HALLOWED GATES OF ASGARD, YOU MUST JOIN US NEXT ISSUE SO THAT WE MAY SHARE TOGETHER THE WONDERMENT THAT AWAITS US!
16

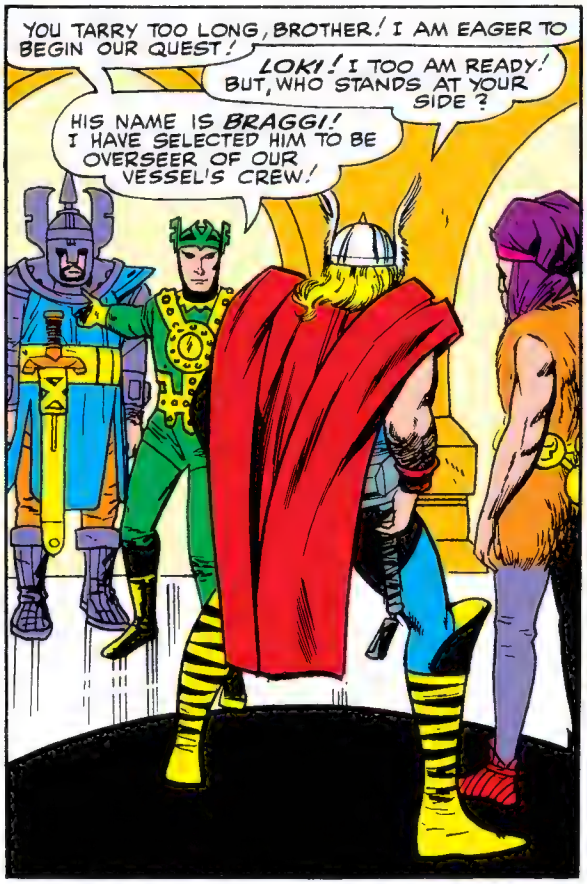
Tales of ASGARD
HOME OF THE MIGHTY NORSE GODS!
NOW BEGINNING
"THE CRIMSON HAND!"
THE START OF ONE OF THE GREATEST QUESTS OF ALL TIME!
I AM ALMOST FINISHED WITH YOUR MAP, THUNDER GOD!
IT IS NO EASY TASK TO PLOT THE COURSE FOR A JOURNEY THAT WILL TAKE YOU INTO THE UNKNOWN... BEYOND ASGARD!
BUT, IF ANY-ONE CAN CHART SUCH A COURSE, IT IS YOU, WISE MORDUK!
STORY BY: STAN LEE The LEGEND TELLER!
ART BY: JACK KIRBY The LEGEND MAKER!
INKING BY: VINCE COLLETTA The LEGEND PORTRAYER!
LETTERING BY: SAM ROSEN The LETTERER!

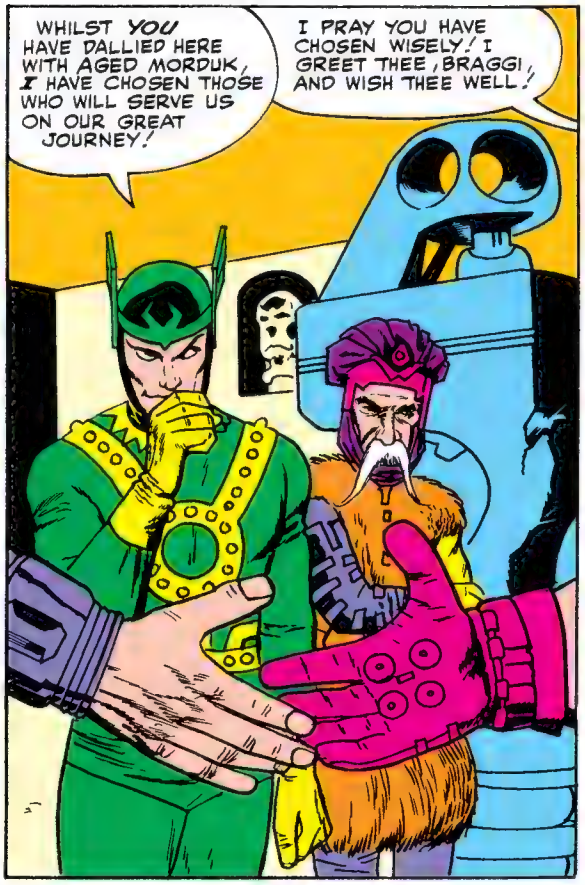

YOUR MISSION MUST NOT FAIL, MIGHTY THOR! FOR, IF YOU DO NOT LEARN WHO HAS CRACKED THE GREAT OVERSWORD OF ASGARD*, THE UNIVERSE WILL NEVER AGAIN BE SAFE!
I THINK NOT OF FAILURE, WISE MORDUK! AND MY HALF-BROTHER, LOKI, SHALL BE WITH ME, TO LEND ME HIS CUNNING AND HIS GUILE!
* AS DRAMATICALLY SHOWN IN THOR # 117... STAN.

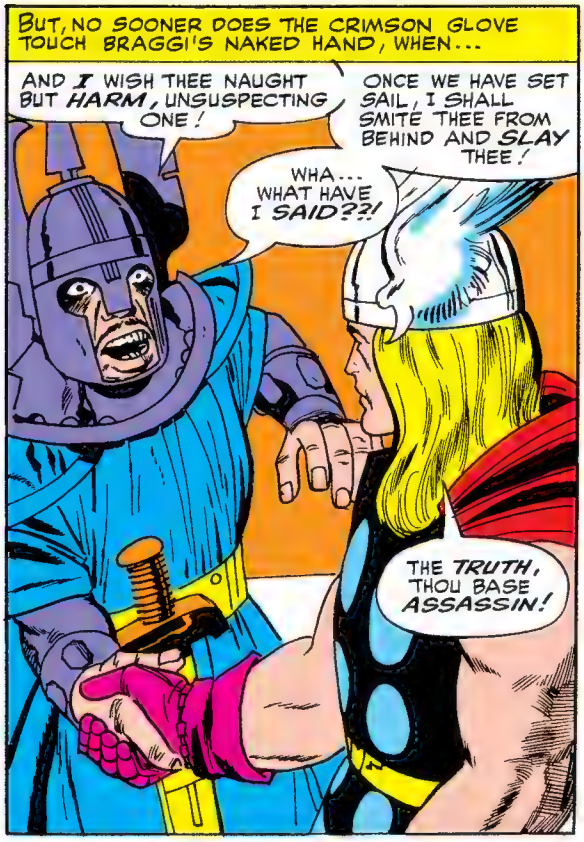
AYE, NOBLE GODLING! AND IT IS FOR THAT REASON THAT YOU SHALL NEED YET ANOTHER WEAPON ... ONE OF THE MOST MYSTICAL OF ALL! I SHALL GIVE YOU... THE CRIMSON HAND!
THE CRIMSON HAND? WHAT MANNER OF WEAPON IS THAT, TRUSTED SAGE?

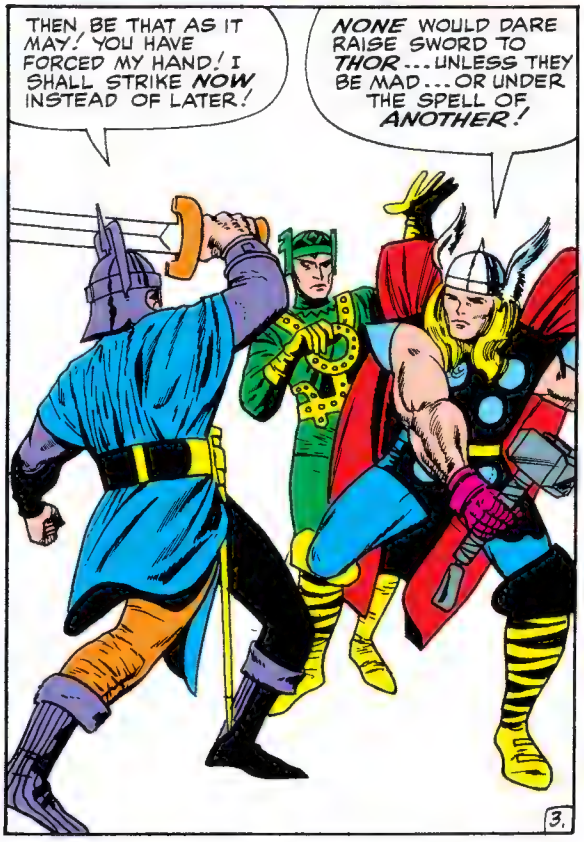
YOU SHALL SEE FOR YOURSELF, MIGHTY ONE! LONG HAS IT LAIN HIDDEN, HERE WITHIN A SECRET CRYPT, UNTIL SUCH TIME AS NOW... WHEN IT WILL BE MOST SORELY NEEDED!
IT IS BUT A GLOVE! A WARRIOR'S CRIMSON GLOVE!
NAY, 'TIS FAR MORE THAN SO SIMPLE AN OBJECT!

WHEN THE ENCHANTED DISCS ON YON GLOVE'S PALM MAKE CONTACT WITH ANOTHER'S HAND, NEITHER YOU NOR HE CAN MOUTH ANY WORDS UNLESS THEY BE THE SOLEMN TRUTH!
A MYSTIC HAND OF TRUTH! I THANK THEE, MORDUK!
2.


YOU TARRY TOO LONG, BROTHER! I AM EAGER TO BEGIN OUR QUEST!
LOKI! I TOO AM READY! BUT, WHO STANDS AT YOUR SIDE?
HIS NAME IS BRAGGI! I HAVE SELECTED HIM TO BE OVERSEER OF OUR VESSEL'S CREW!


WHILST YOU HAVE DALLIED HERE WITH AGED MORDUK, I HAVE CHOSEN THOSE WHO WILL SERVE US ON OUR GREAT JOURNEY!
I PRAY YOU HAVE CHOSEN WISELY! I GREET THEE, BRAGGI, AND WISH THEE WELL!


BUT, NO SOONER DOES THE CRIMSON GLOVE TOUCH BRAGGI'S NAKED HAND, WHEN...
AND I WISH THEE NAUGHT BUT HARM, UNSUSPECTING ONE!
ONCE WE HAVE SET SAIL, I SHALL SMITE THEE FROM BEHIND AND SLAY THEE!
WHA... WHAT HAVE I SAID??!
THE TRUTH, THOU BASE ASSASSIN!


THEN, BE THAT AS IT MAY! YOU HAVE FORCED MY HAND! I SHALL STRIKE NOW, INSTEAD OF LATER!
NONE WOULD DARE RAISE SWORD TO THOR... UNLESS THEY BE MAD... OR UNDER THE SPELL OF ANOTHER!
3.

AND MADNESS DOES NOT SHOW IN YOUR EYES!! I SEE NAUGHT BUT EVIL THERE!
YET, YOU ARE BUT A TOOL! IT IS THE ONE WHO HIRED YOU... THE ONE WHO GAVE YOU YOUR DEADLY COMMAND WHO IS MY TRUE ENEMY! YOU ARE LIKE UNTO A SWORD, POSSESSING NO WILL SAVE THE WILL OF HE WHO USES YOU!
NOW BEGONE! THE AWESOME WRATH OF THOR IS NOT TO BE WASTED ON ONE AS LOWLY AS THEE!
IT IS FORTUNATE YOU LEARNED OF HIS DUPLICITY, BROTHER! YET, I CANNOT UNDERSTAND HOW YOU ACCOMPLISHED SUCH A FEAT!
WE SHALL SPEAK OF THAT ANOTHER TIME! THERE IS MUCH TO DO NOW!
WE SHALL PROBABLY NEVER LEARN WHO BRIBED THE ASSASSIN, BRAGGI!
PERHAPS NOT! BUT LET US CLASP HANDS, MY BROTHER LOKI, AND THEN BEGIN OUR QUEST!
THAT GLOVE! THAT CRIMSON HAND! NOW I KNOW! AFTER ALL THESE AGES...!
4.

TIME ENOUGH FOR HAND CLASPING LATER! NOW THERE IS MUCH WORK TO BE DONE! I MUST NOT WASTE A MINUTE!
HE IS TOO WILY TO BE THUS TRAPPED! BUT I MUST BE EVER ON GUARD AGAINST MY SCHEMING HALF-BROTHER!
AND NOW, YOUR JOURNEY MUST BEGIN, GOD OF THUNDER! MANY UNDREAMED-OF DANGERS AWAIT THEE, BUT YOU ARE ARMED WITH TRUTH, AND YOUR OWN AWESOME STRENGTH! YOU MUST NOT FALTER!
NOT WHILE THERE BE LIFE WITHIN ME, LOYAL MORDUK!
AND THEN, THE GREAT HORN SOUNDS, REVERBERATING THROUGHOUT FABLED ASGARD! LORD ODIN'S OWN SHIP HAS BEEN MADE READY! THE QUEST SHALL NOW BEGIN!
AND, AS SURELY AS THE RAINBOW BRIDGE SPANS THE INFINITE VOID OF SPACE, WE SHALL BE WITH THEE AGAIN NEXT ISSUE! SO BE IT!

MARVEL POP ART PRODUCTIONS

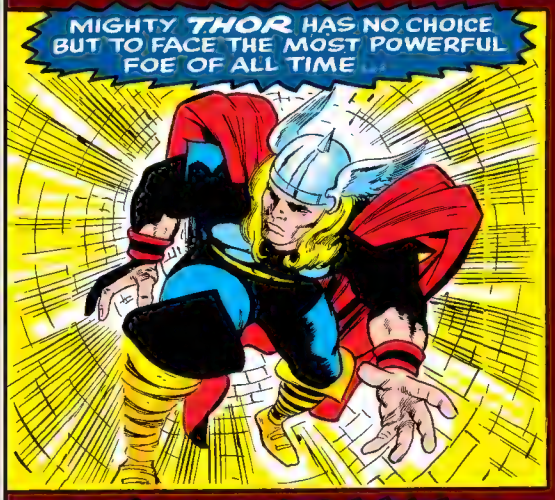
12¢

119 AUG

JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY WITH THE MIGHTY THOR

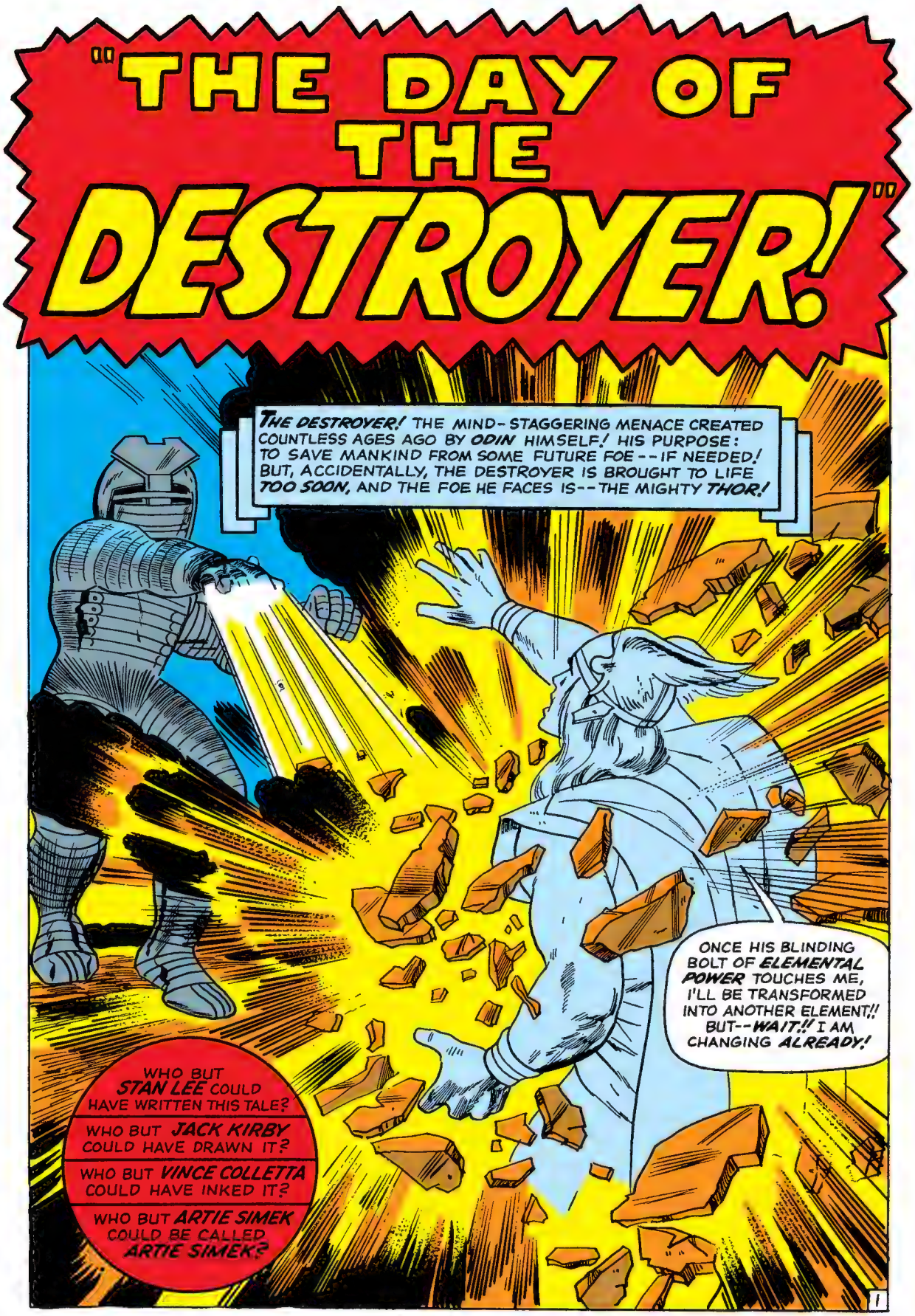
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

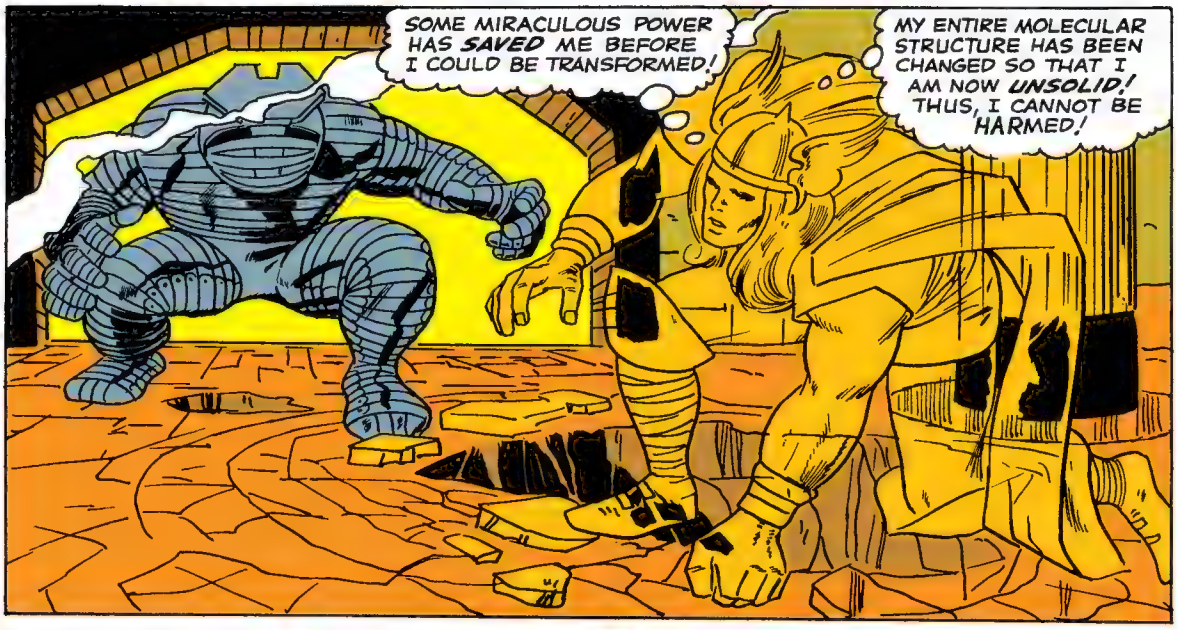
IND.

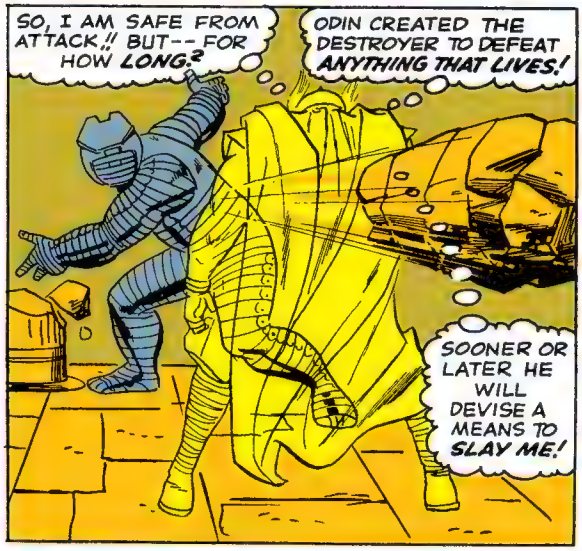


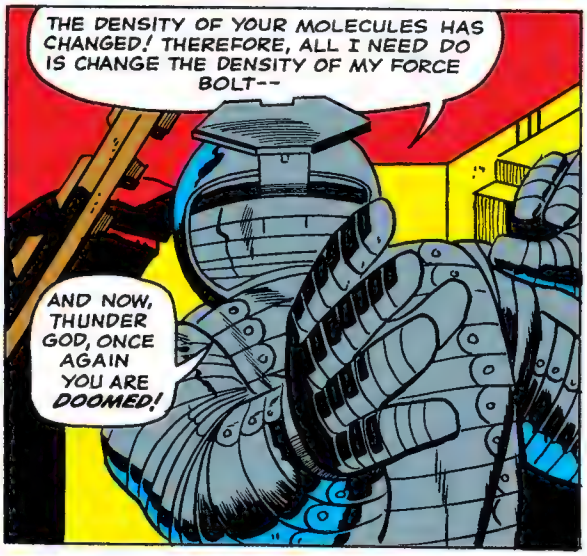
ALL THIS AND MORE AWAITS YOU IN

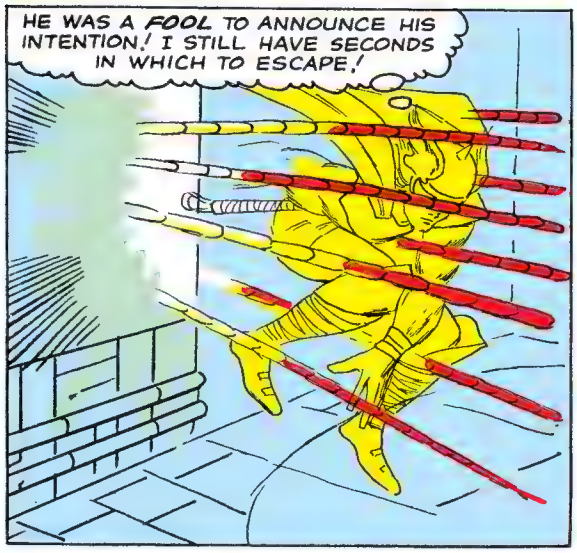
"THE DAY OF THE DESTROYER!"

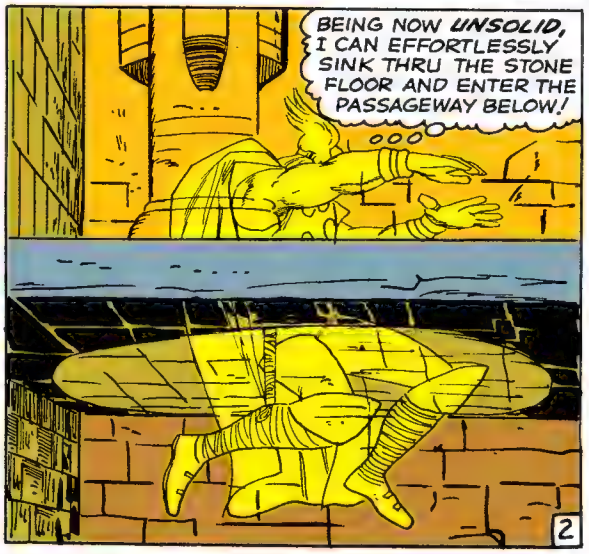

"THE DAY OF THE DESTROYER!"
THE DESTROYER! THE MIND-STAGGERING MENACE CREATED COUNTLESS AGES AGO BY ODIN HIMSELF! HIS PURPOSE: TO SAVE MANKIND FROM SOME FUTURE FOE--IF NEEDED! BUT, ACCIDENTALLY, THE DESTROYER IS BROUGHT TO LIFE TOO SOON, AND THE FOE HE FACES IS--THE MIGHTY THOR!
ONCE HIS BLINDING BOLT OF ELEMENTAL POWER TOUCHES ME, I'LL BE TRANSFORMED INTO ANOTHER ELEMENT!! BUT--WAIT!! I AM CHANGING ALREADY!
WHO BUT STAN LEE COULD HAVE WRITTEN THIS TALE?
WHO BUT JACK KIRBY COULD HAVE DRAWN IT?
WHO BUT VINCE COLLETTA COULD HAVE INKED IT?
WHO BUT ARTIE SIMEK COULD BE CALLED ARTIE SIMEK?
1

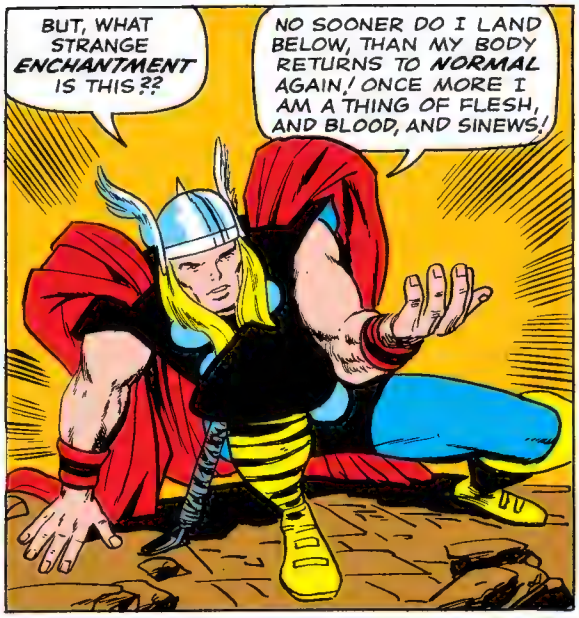

SOME MIRACULOUS POWER HAS SAVED ME BEFORE I COULD BE TRANSFORMED!
MY ENTIRE MOLECULAR STRUCTURE HAS BEEN CHANGED SO THAT I AM NOW UNSOLID! THUS, I CANNOT BE HARMED!


SO, I AM SAFE FROM ATTACK!! BUT--FOR HOW LONG?
ODIN CREATED THE DESTROYER TO DEFEAT ANYTHING THAT LIVES!
SOONER OR LATER HE WILL DEVISE A MEANS TO SLAY ME!

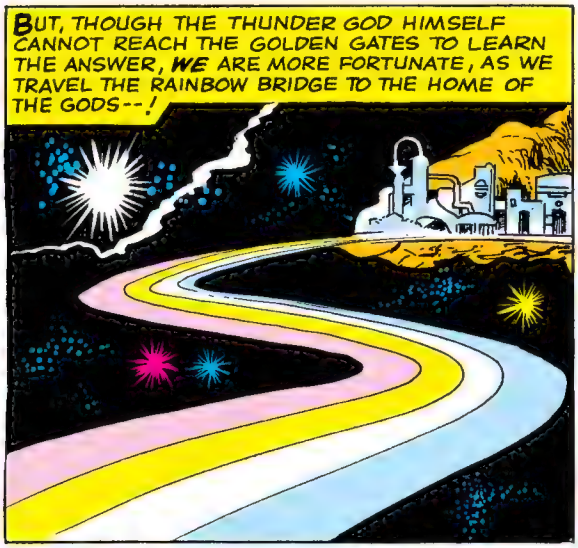

THE DENSITY OF YOUR MOLECULES HAS CHANGED! THEREFORE, ALL I NEED DO IS CHANGE THE DENSITY OF MY FORCE BOLT--
AND NOW, THUNDER GOD, ONCE AGAIN YOU ARE DOOMED!

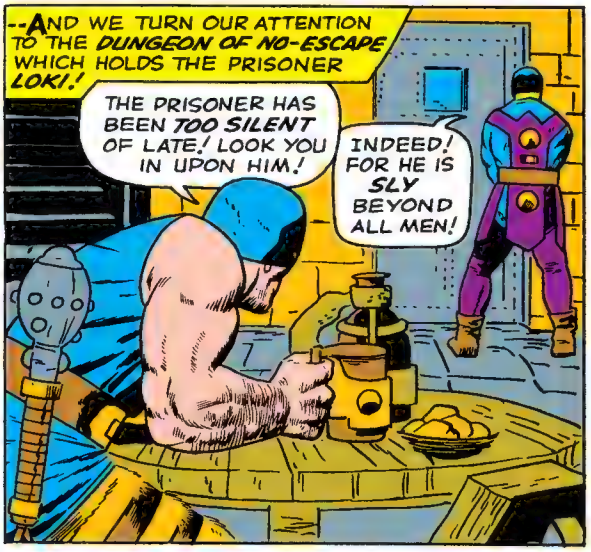

HE WAS A FOOL TO ANNOUNCE HIS INTENTION! I STILL HAVE SECONDS IN WHICH TO ESCAPE!


BEING NOW UNSOLID, I CAN EFFORTLESSLY SINK THRU THE STONE FLOOR AND ENTER THE PASSAGEWAY BELOW!

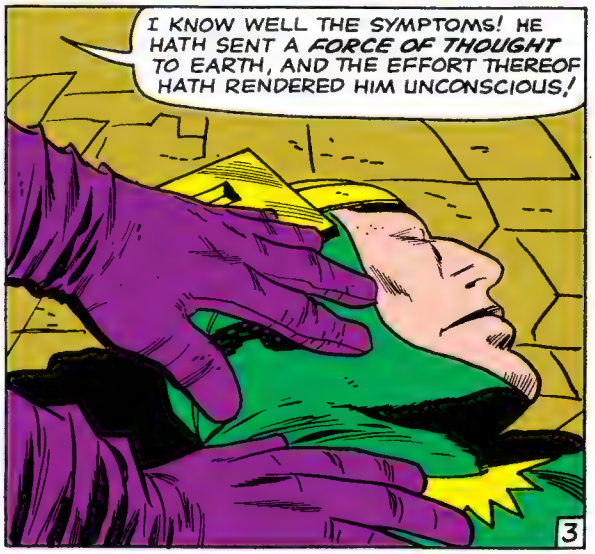

BUT, WHAT STRANGE ENCHANTMENT IS THIS??
NO SOONER DO I LAND BELOW, THAN MY BODY RETURNS TO NORMAL AGAIN! ONCE MORE I AM A THING OF FLESH, AND BLOOD, AND SINEWS!

SUCH SORCERY CAN COME ONLY FROM FABLED ASGARD!! BUT, WHO--WHO AMONG THE IMMORTALS HAS TAKEN A HAND IN THIS DEADLY GAME??


BUT, THOUGH THE THUNDER GOD HIMSELF CANNOT REACH THE GOLDEN GATES TO LEARN THE ANSWER, WE ARE MORE FORTUNATE, AS WE TRAVEL THE RAINBOW BRIDGE TO THE HOME OF THE GODS--!

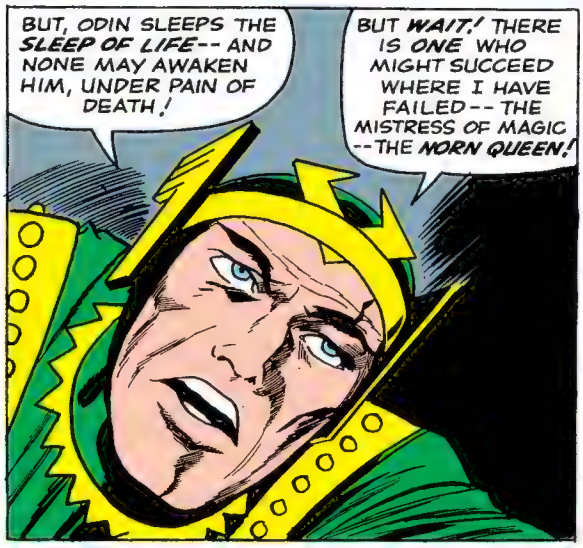

--AND WE TURN OUR ATTENTION TO THE DUNGEON OF NO-ESCAPE WHICH HOLDS THE PRISONER LOKI!
THE PRISONER HAS BEEN TOO SILENT OF LATE! LOOK YOU IN UPON HIM!
INDEED! FOR HE IS SLY BEYOND ALL MEN!

WHAT TRICK IS THIS? HE LIES PROSTRATE UPON YON FLOOR!
IT IS NO TRICK! 'TIS THE RESULT OF A MYSTIC TRANCE-- OF WHICH HE IS THE MASTER!

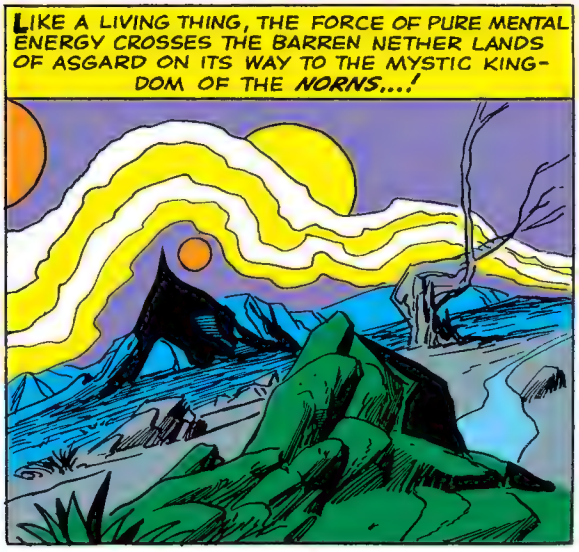

I KNOW WELL THE SYMPTOMS! HE HATH SENT A FORCE OF THOUGHT TO EARTH, AND THE EFFORT THEREOF HATH RENDERED HIM UNCONSCIOUS!

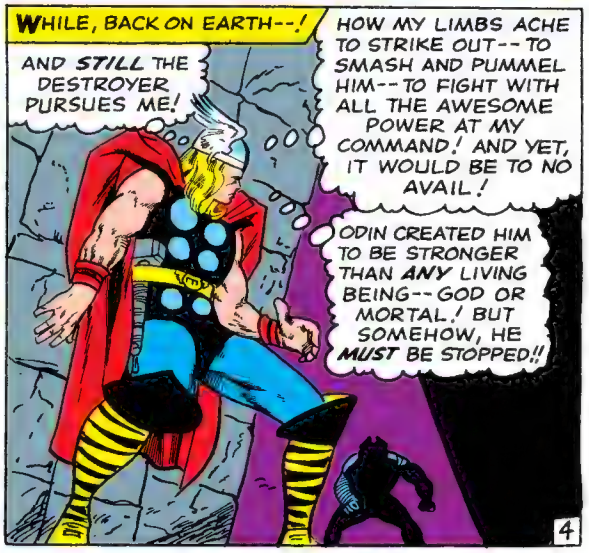
CAREFUL! HE AWAKES!
I DID IT! I SAVED THOR! I MADE HIS FORM UNSOLID!

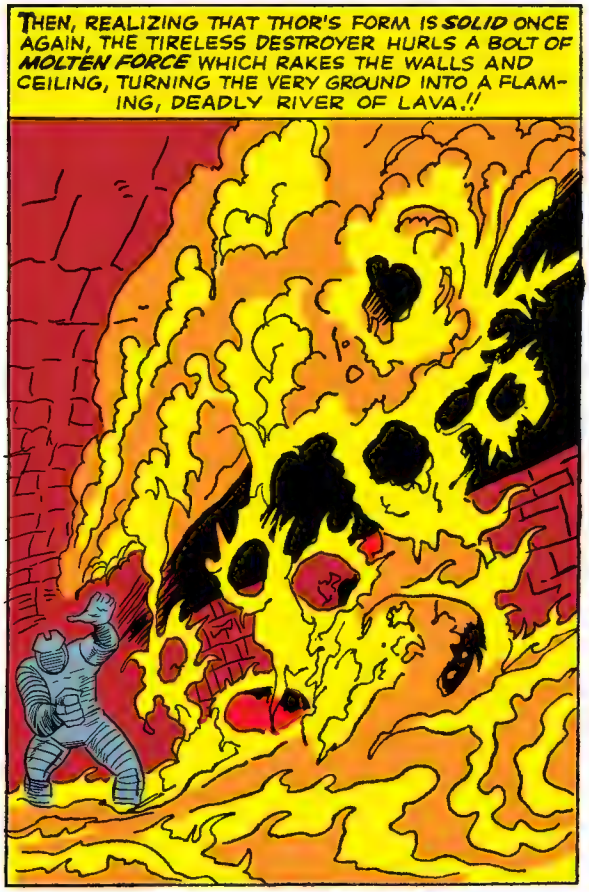
CAN IT BE THE MADNESS IS UPON HIM?
NO MATTER! IT IS NO CONCERN OF OURS!
BUT, THE STRAIN WAS TOO GREAT! MY TRANCE IS ENDED! NOTHING CAN SAVE HIM NOW-- EXCEPT THE POWER OF ODIN, HIMSELF!

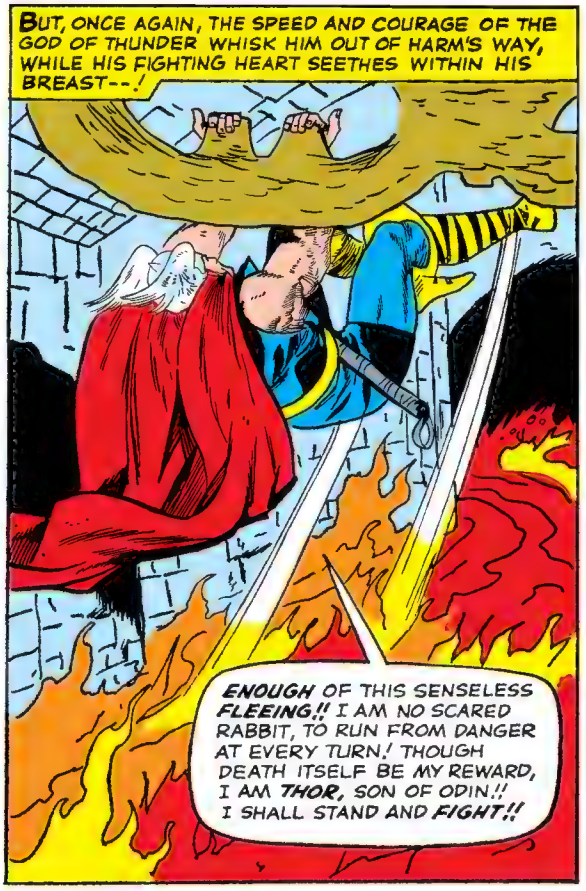

BUT, ODIN SLEEPS THE SLEEP OF LIFE-- AND NONE MAY AWAKEN HIM, UNDER PAIN OF DEATH!
BUT WAIT! THERE IS ONE WHO MIGHT SUCCEED WHERE I HAVE FAILED-- THE MISTRESS OF MAGIC --THE NORN QUEEN!

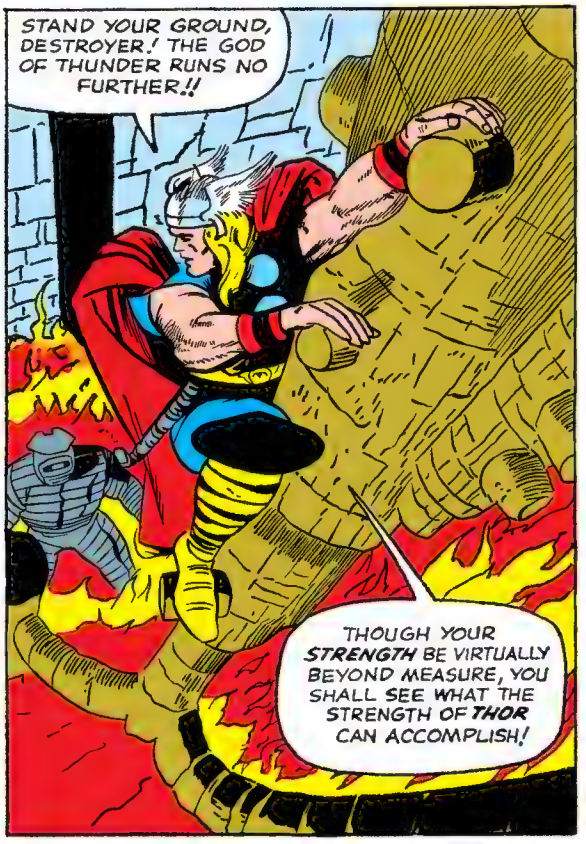
THOR MUST BE SAVED, FOR, IF HE DIES, ODIN WILL KNOW T'WAS MY DOING--!
ONLY THE NORN QUEEN CAN HELP-- I MUST SEND HER A MENTAL WAVE IMAGE--!!


LIKE A LIVING THING, THE FORCE OF PURE MENTAL ENERGY CROSSES THE BARREN NETHER LANDS OF ASGARD ON ITS WAY TO THE MYSTIC KINGDOM OF THE NORNS...!

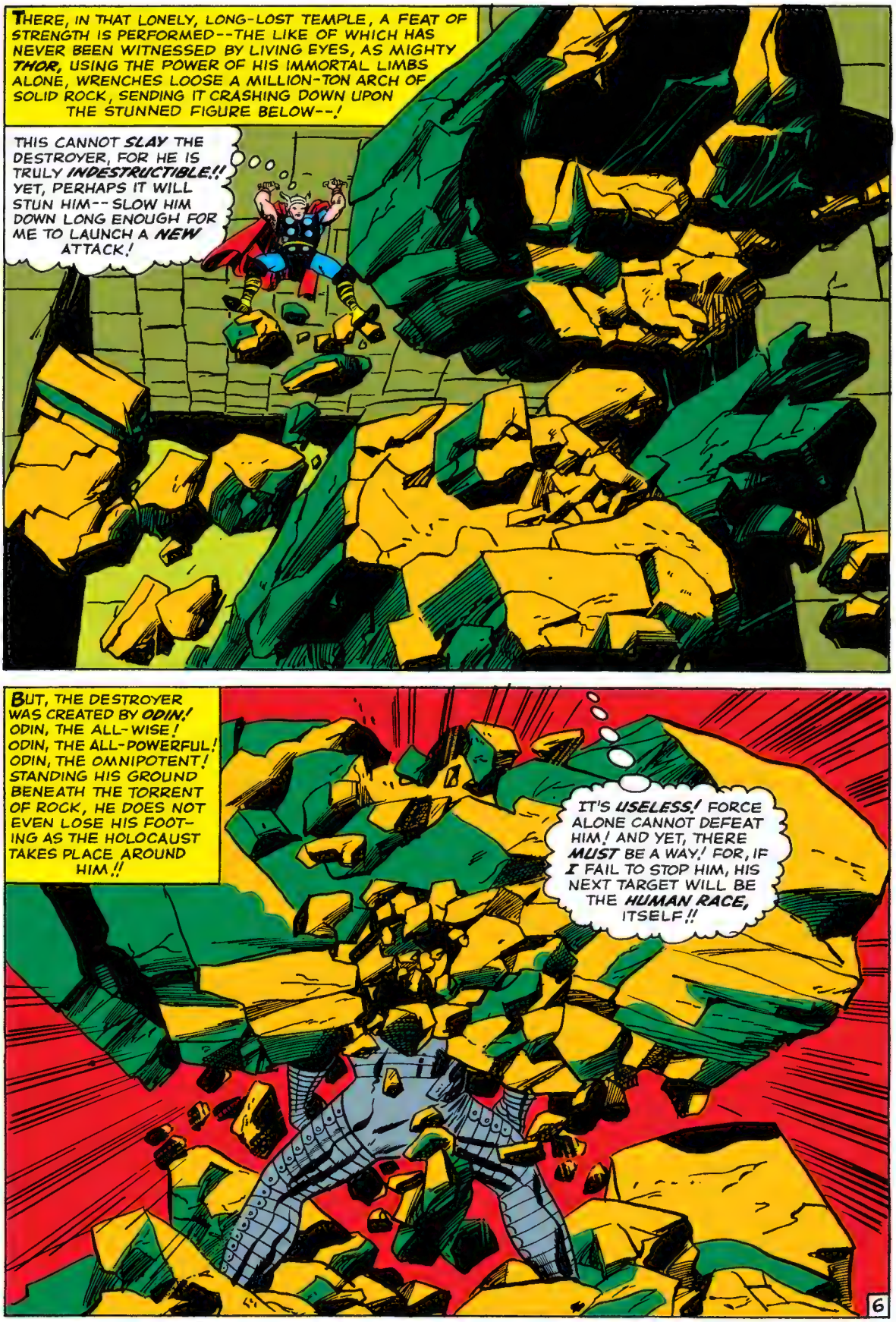

WHILE, BACK ON EARTH--!
AND STILL THE DESTROYER PURSUES ME!
HOW MY LIMBS ACHE TO STRIKE OUT-- TO SMASH AND PUMMEL HIM-- TO FIGHT WITH ALL THE AWESOME POWER AT MY COMMAND! AND YET, IT WOULD BE TO NO AVAIL!
ODIN CREATED HIM TO BE STRONGER THAN ANY LIVING BEING-- GOD OR MORTAL! BUT SOMEHOW, HE MUST BE STOPPED!!

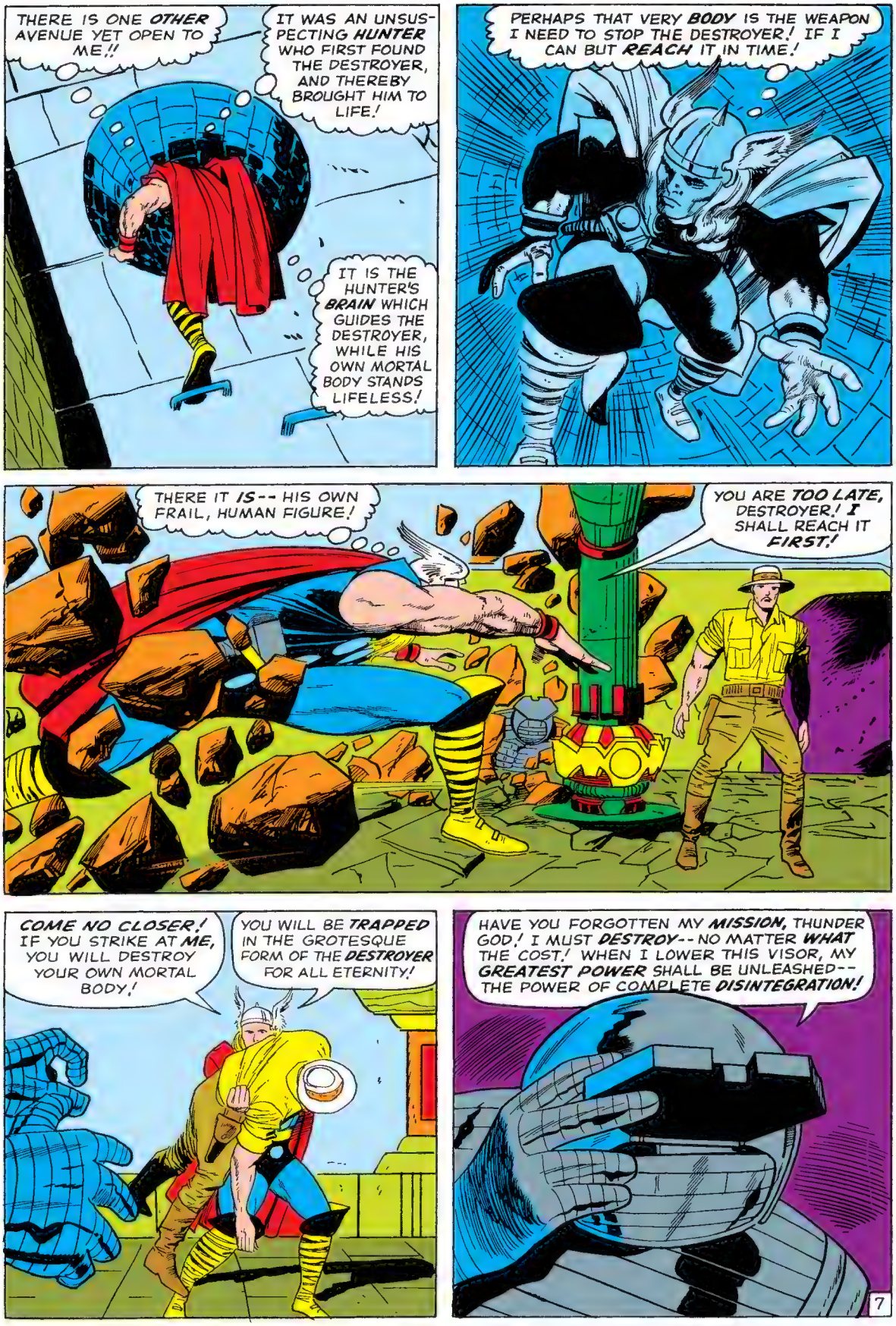

THEN, REALIZING THAT THOR'S FORM IS SOLID ONCE AGAIN, THE TIRELESS DESTROYER HURLS A BOLT OF MOLTEN FORCE WHICH RAKES THE WALLS AND CEILING, TURNING THE VERY GROUND INTO A FLAMING, DEADLY RIVER OF LAVA.!!

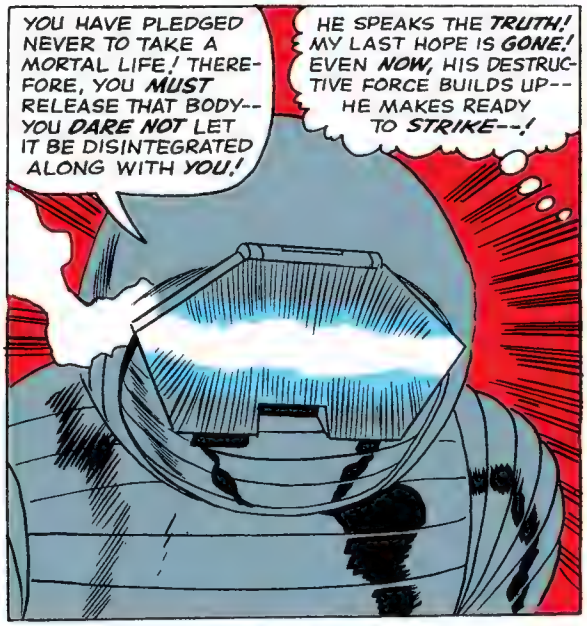

BUT, ONCE AGAIN, THE SPEED AND COURAGE OF THE GOD OF THUNDER WHISK HIM OUT OF HARM'S WAY, WHILE HIS FIGHTING HEART SEETHES WITHIN HIS BREAST--!
ENOUGH OF THIS SENSELESS FLEEING!! I AM NO SCARED RABBIT, TO RUN FROM DANGER AT EVERY TURN! THOUGH DEATH ITSELF BE MY REWARD, I AM THOR, SON OF ODIN!! I SHALL STAND AND FIGHT!!


STAND YOUR GROUND, DESTROYER! THE GOD OF THUNDER RUNS NO FURTHER!!
THOUGH YOUR STRENGTH BE VIRTUALLY BEYOND MEASURE, YOU SHALL SEE WHAT THE STRENGTH OF THOR CAN ACCOMPLISH!

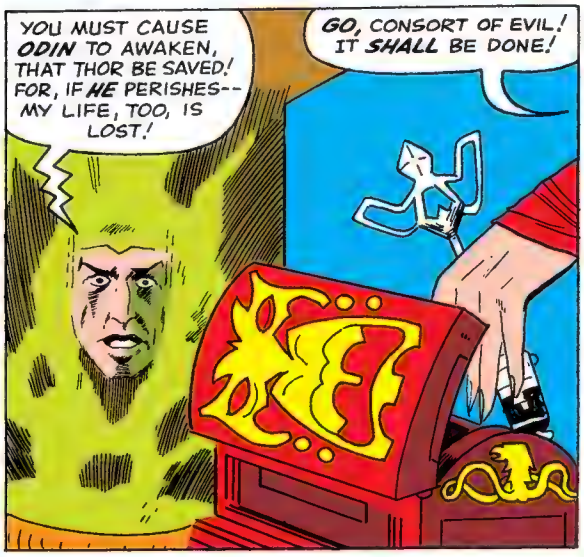
HE STANDS DIRECTLY BELOW-- NOT KNOWING WHAT MY PLAN MAY BE!
THIS THEN IS MY MOMENT TO STRIKE! THIS IS WHEN THE MIGHT OF A THUNDER GOD SHALL YET WREST VICTORY FROM THE DREGS OF DEFEAT!
KRAKK!


THERE, IN THAT LONELY, LONG-LOST TEMPLE, A FEAT OF STRENGTH IS PERFORMED--THE LIKE OF WHICH HAS NEVER BEEN WITNESSED BY LIVING EYES, AS MIGHTY THOR, USING THE POWER OF HIS IMMORTAL LIMBS ALONE, WRENCHES LOOSE A MILLION-TON ARCH OF SOLID ROCK, SENDING IT CRASHING DOWN UPON THE STUNNED FIGURE BELOW--!
THIS CANNOT SLAY THE DESTROYER, FOR HE IS TRULY INDESTRUCTIBLE!! YET, PERHAPS IT WILL STUN HIM-- SLOW HIM DOWN LONG ENOUGH FOR ME TO LAUNCH A NEW ATTACK!
BUT, THE DESTROYER WAS CREATED BY ODIN! ODIN, THE ALL-WISE! ODIN, THE ALL-POWERFUL! ODIN, THE OMNIPOTENT! STANDING HIS GROUND BENEATH THE TORRENT OF ROCK, HE DOES NOT EVEN LOSE HIS FOOTING AS THE HOLOCAUST TAKES PLACE AROUND HIM!!
IT'S USELESS! FORCE ALONE CANNOT DEFEAT HIM! AND YET, THERE MUST BE A WAY! FOR, IF I FAIL TO STOP HIM, HIS NEXT TARGET WILL BE THE HUMAN RACE, ITSELF!!

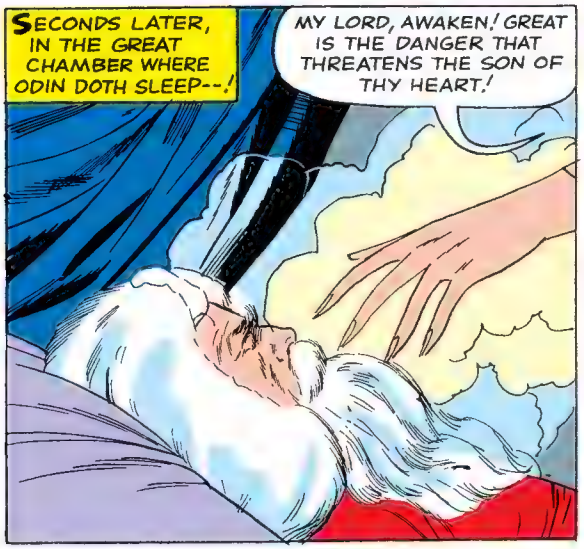

THERE IS ONE OTHER AVENUE YET OPEN TO ME!!
IT WAS AN UNSUSPECTING HUNTER WHO FIRST FOUND THE DESTROYER, AND THEREBY BROUGHT HIM TO LIFE!
IT IS THE HUNTER'S BRAIN WHICH GUIDES THE DESTROYER, WHILE HIS OWN MORTAL BODY STANDS LIFELESS!
PERHAPS THAT VERY BODY IS THE WEAPON I NEED TO STOP THE DESTROYER! IF I CAN BUT REACH IT IN TIME!
THERE IT IS -- HIS OWN FRAIL, HUMAN FIGURE!
YOU ARE TOO LATE, DESTROYER! I SHALL REACH IT FIRST!
COME NO CLOSER! IF YOU STRIKE AT ME, YOU WILL DESTROY YOUR OWN MORTAL BODY!
YOU WILL BE TRAPPED IN THE GROTESQUE FORM OF THE DESTROYER FOR ALL ETERNITY!
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN MY MISSION, THUNDER GOD! I MUST DESTROY -- NO MATTER WHAT THE COST! WHEN I LOWER THIS VISOR, MY GREATEST POWER SHALL BE UNLEASHED -- THE POWER OF COMPLETE DISINTEGRATION!

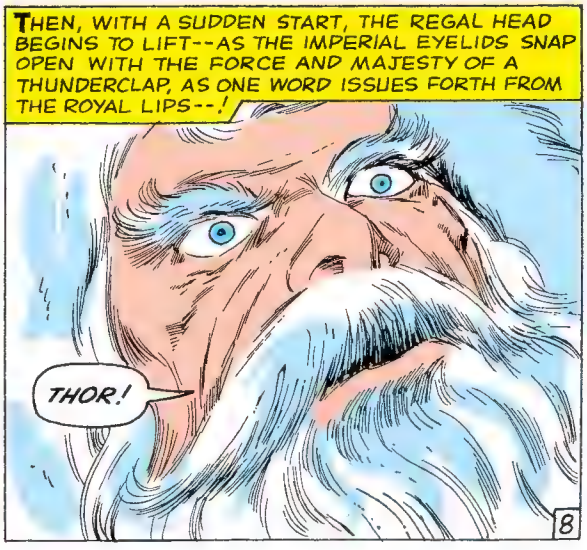

YOU HAVE PLEDGED NEVER TO TAKE A MORTAL LIFE! THEREFORE, YOU MUST RELEASE THAT BODY--YOU DARE NOT LET IT BE DISINTEGRATED ALONG WITH YOU!
HE SPEAKS THE TRUTH! MY LAST HOPE IS GONE! EVEN NOW, HIS DESTRUCTIVE FORCE BUILDS UP--HE MAKES READY TO STRIKE--!

MEANWHILE, LOKI'S MENTAL WAVE IMAGE HAS FINALLY REACHED THE FORBIDDING NORN QUEEN--!
WE HAVE BEEN ALLIES IN THE PAST, WE TWO!
YOU MUST DO THIS SERVICE FOR ME NOW!!

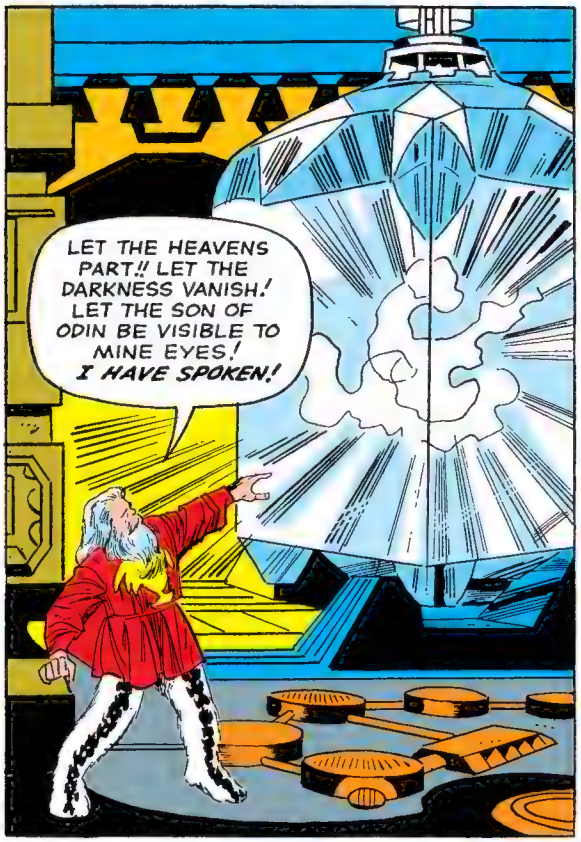


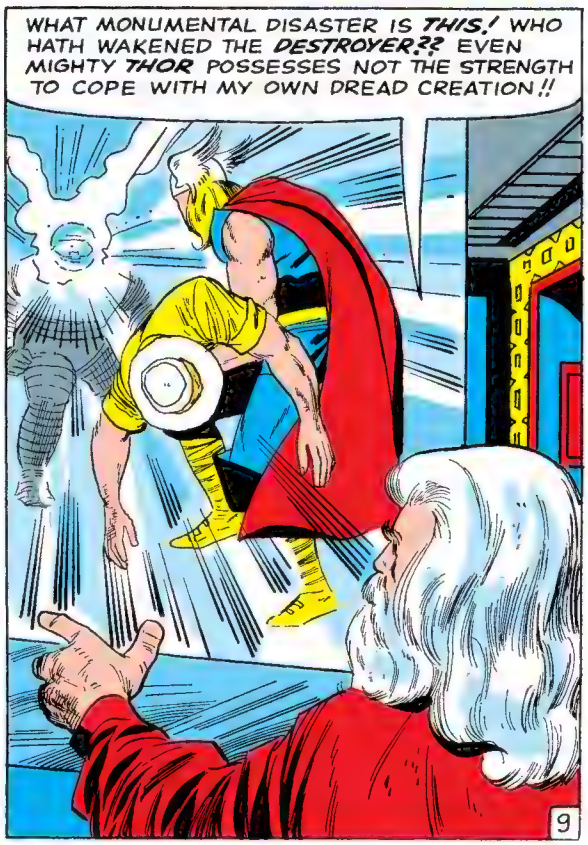
*THIS IS ACTUALLY A VERY LOOSE TRANSLATION, AS WE FEEL THAT VERY FEW OF OUR READERS WOULD FULLY UNDERSTAND THIS CHANT IF RECITED IN THE ORIGINAL NORN DIALECT! --STAN.

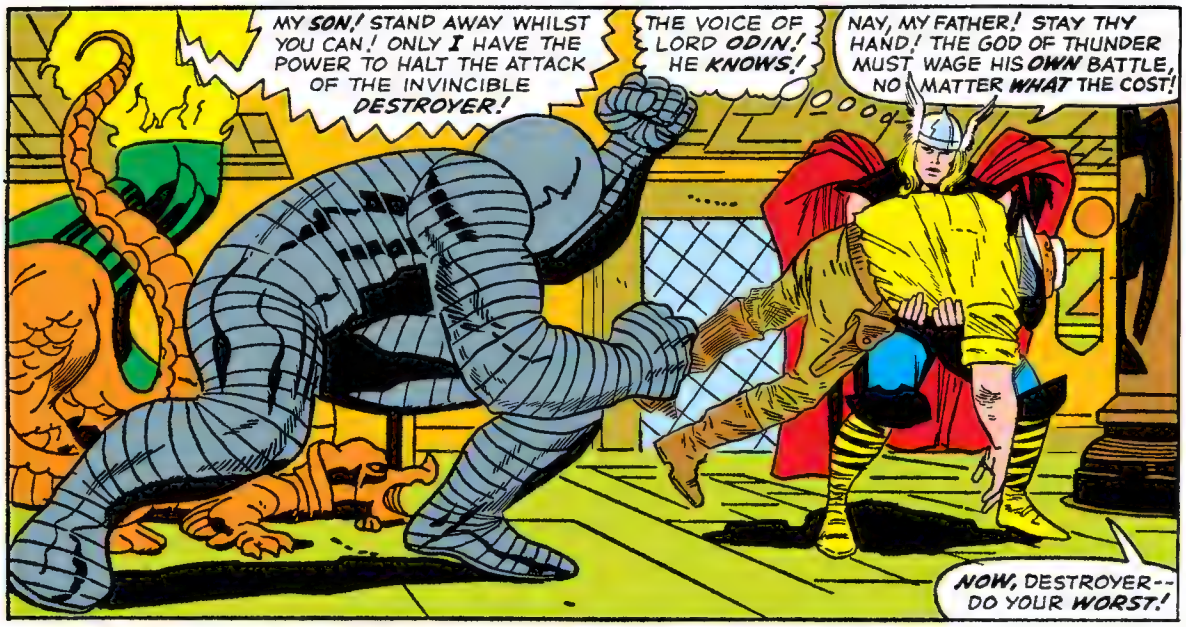

SECONDS LATER, IN THE GREAT CHAMBER WHERE ODIN DOTH SLEEP--!
MY LORD, AWAKEN! GREAT IS THE DANGER THAT THREATENS THE SON OF THY HEART!

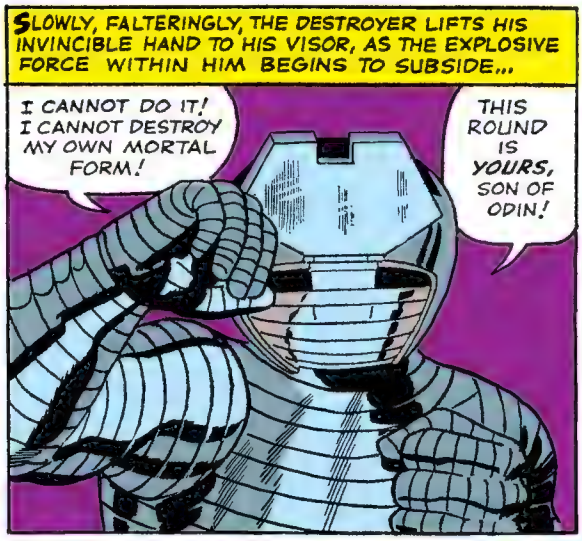

THEN, WITH A SUDDEN START, THE REGAL HEAD BEGINS TO LIFT--AS THE IMPERIAL EYELIDS SNAP OPEN WITH THE FORCE AND MAJESTY OF A THUNDERCLAP, AS ONE WORD ISSUES FORTH FROM THE ROYAL LIPS--!
THOR!

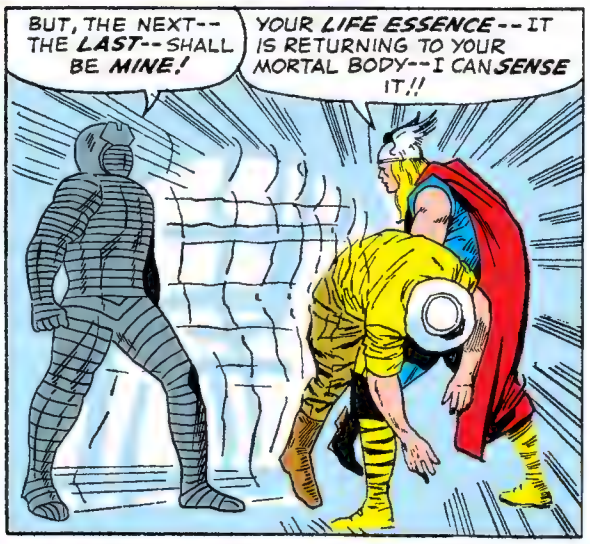
WARRIORS OF THE REALM, *STAND ASIDE!* I HAVE HEARD A MESSAGE IN A DREAM! THE GOD OF THUNDER IS IN DANGER! *WOE TO ANY* WHO MAY BE RESPONSIBLE FOR SUCH DIRE TIDINGS!!

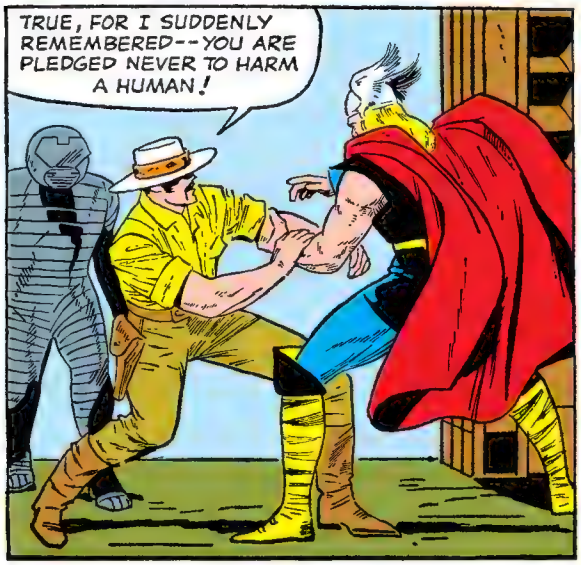

LET THE HEAVENS PART!! LET THE DARKNESS VANISH! LET THE SON OF ODIN BE VISIBLE TO MINE EYES! *I HAVE SPOKEN!*

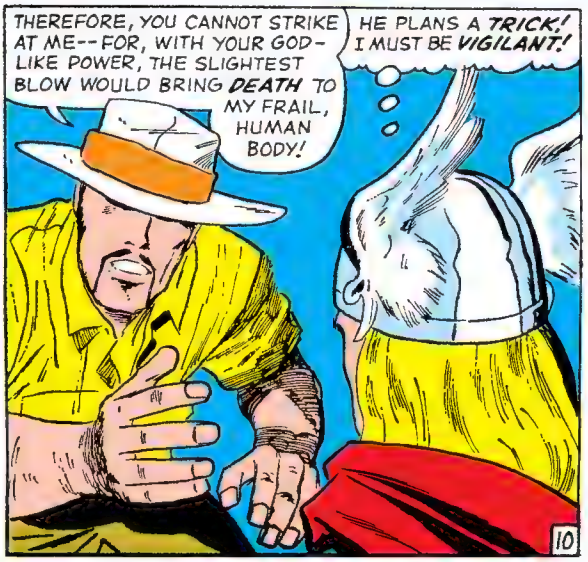

WHAT MONUMENTAL DISASTER IS *THIS!* WHO HATH WAKENED THE *DESTROYER?!* EVEN MIGHTY *THOR* POSSESSES NOT THE STRENGTH TO COPE WITH MY OWN DREAD CREATION!!

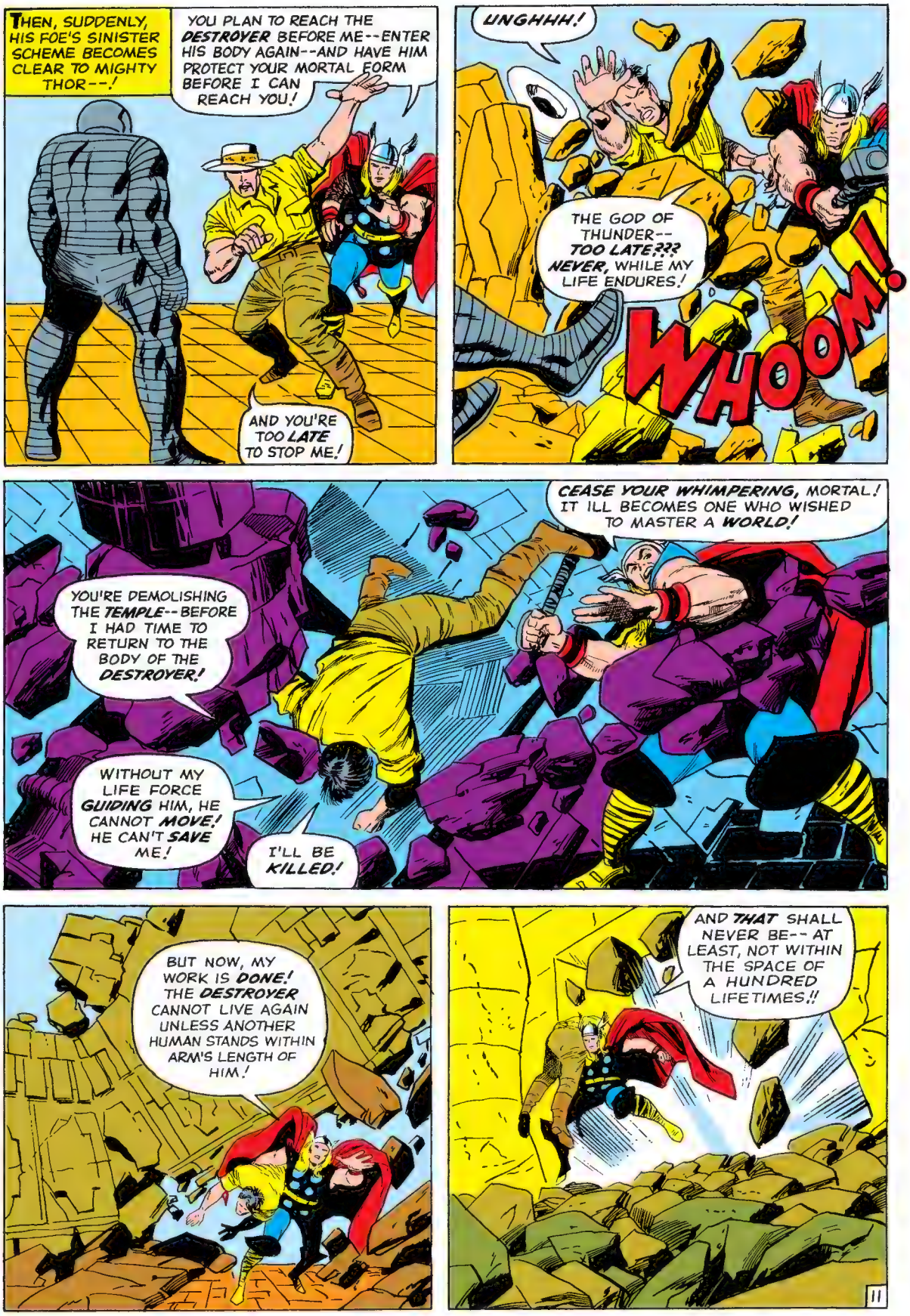

MY SON! STAND AWAY WHILST YOU CAN! ONLY I HAVE THE POWER TO HALT THE ATTACK OF THE INVINCIBLE DESTROYER!
THE VOICE OF LORD ODIN! HE KNOWS!
NAY, MY FATHER! STAY THY HAND! THE GOD OF THUNDER MUST WAGE HIS OWN BATTLE, NO MATTER WHAT THE COST!
NOW, DESTROYER--DO YOUR WORST!


SLOWLY, FALTERINGLY, THE DESTROYER LIFTS HIS INVINCIBLE HAND TO HIS VISOR, AS THE EXPLOSIVE FORCE WITHIN HIM BEGINS TO SUBSIDE...
I CANNOT DO IT! I CANNOT DESTROY MY OWN MORTAL FORM!
THIS ROUND IS YOURS, SON OF ODIN!


BUT, THE NEXT--THE LAST--SHALL BE MINE!
YOUR LIFE ESSENCE--IT IS RETURNING TO YOUR MORTAL BODY--I CAN SENSE IT!!


TRUE, FOR I SUDDENLY REMEMBERED--YOU ARE PLEDGED NEVER TO HARM A HUMAN!

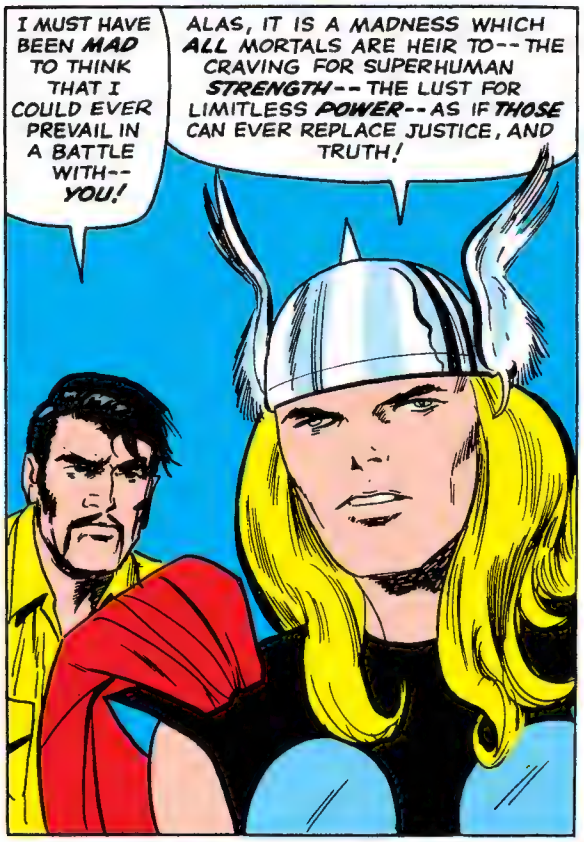

THEREFORE, YOU CANNOT STRIKE AT ME--FOR, WITH YOUR GOD-LIKE POWER, THE SLIGHTEST BLOW WOULD BRING DEATH TO MY FRAIL, HUMAN BODY!
HE PLANS A TRICK! I MUST BE VIGILANT!


THEN, SUDDENLY, HIS FOE'S SINISTER SCHEME BECOMES CLEAR TO MIGHTY THOR--!
YOU PLAN TO REACH THE DESTROYER BEFORE ME--ENTER HIS BODY AGAIN--AND HAVE HIM PROTECT YOUR MORTAL FORM BEFORE I CAN REACH YOU!
AND YOU'RE TOO LATE TO STOP ME!
UNGHHH!
THE GOD OF THUNDER-- TOO LATE??? NEVER, WHILE MY LIFE ENDURES!
WHOOM!
CEASE YOUR WHIMPERING, MORTAL! IT ILL BECOMES ONE WHO WISHED TO MASTER A WORLD!
YOU'RE DEMOLISHING THE TEMPLE--BEFORE I HAD TIME TO RETURN TO THE BODY OF THE DESTROYER!
WITHOUT MY LIFE FORCE GUIDING HIM, HE CANNOT MOVE! HE CAN'T SAVE ME!
I'LL BE KILLED!
BUT NOW, MY WORK IS DONE! THE DESTROYER CANNOT LIVE AGAIN UNLESS ANOTHER HUMAN STANDS WITHIN ARM'S LENGTH OF HIM!
AND THAT SHALL NEVER BE-- AT LEAST, NOT WITHIN THE SPACE OF A HUNDRED LIFETIMES!!
11

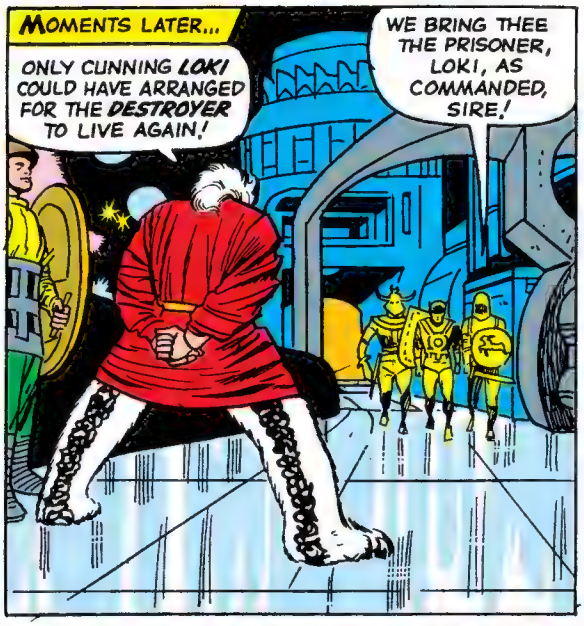
FOR, THE TEMPLE OF DARKNESS, WHICH WAS BUILT TO HOUSE THE MOST DESTRUCTIVE LIVING FORCE ON EARTH, SHALL NOW BURY IT BEYOND THE POWER OF ANY MORTAL EVER TO UNEARTH AGAIN!

SOMEHOW, A VICTORY HAS MORE MEANING WHEN IT IS WON BY THE FORCE OF YOUR OWN ARMS, THE INGENUITY OF YOUR OWN BRAIN! THIS BATTLE I SHALL REMEMBER FOR MANY YEARS TO COME!

WHAT--WHAT WILL YOU DO TO ME NOW--?
DO TO YOU, MORTAL? NOTHING!
YOU WERE BUT A HELPLESS PAWN, BUFFETED ABOUT BY FORCES YOU COULD NEVER HOPE TO COMPREHEND!!


I MUST HAVE BEEN MAD TO THINK THAT I COULD EVER PREVAIL IN A BATTLE WITH-- YOU!
ALAS, IT IS A MADNESS WHICH ALL MORTALS ARE HEIR TO--THE CRAVING FOR SUPERHUMAN STRENGTH--THE LUST FOR LIMITLESS POWER--AS IF THOSE CAN EVER REPLACE JUSTICE, AND TRUTH!

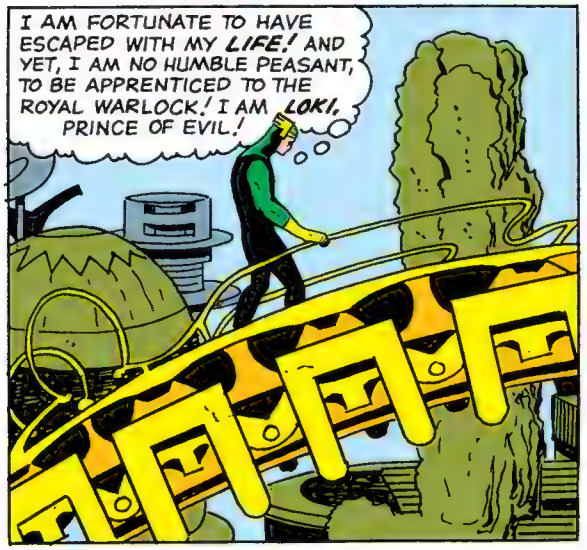
MY FATHER, THE BATTLE IS ENDED--THE VICTORY WON! I THANK THEE FOR REMAINING ALOOF--FOR STAYING THY HAND!
MY HEART SWELLS WITH PRIDE AT THY GALLANTRY, MY SON! I HAVE SEEN ENOUGH! SO BE IT!

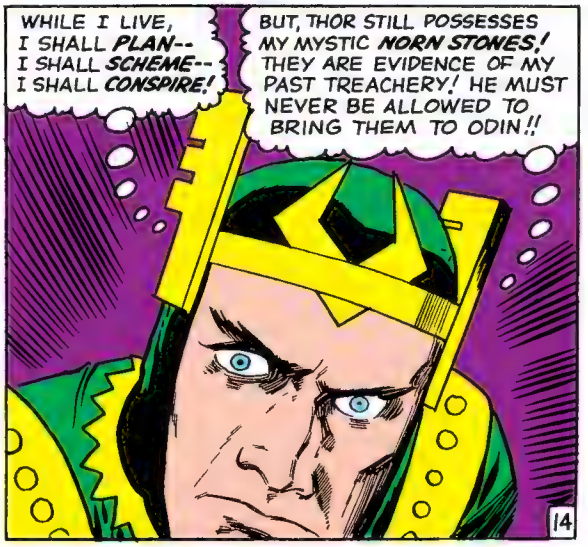

MOMENTS LATER...
ONLY CUNNING LOKI COULD HAVE ARRANGED FOR THE DESTROYER TO LIVE AGAIN!
WE BRING THEE THE PRISONER, LOKI, AS COMMANDED, SIRE!

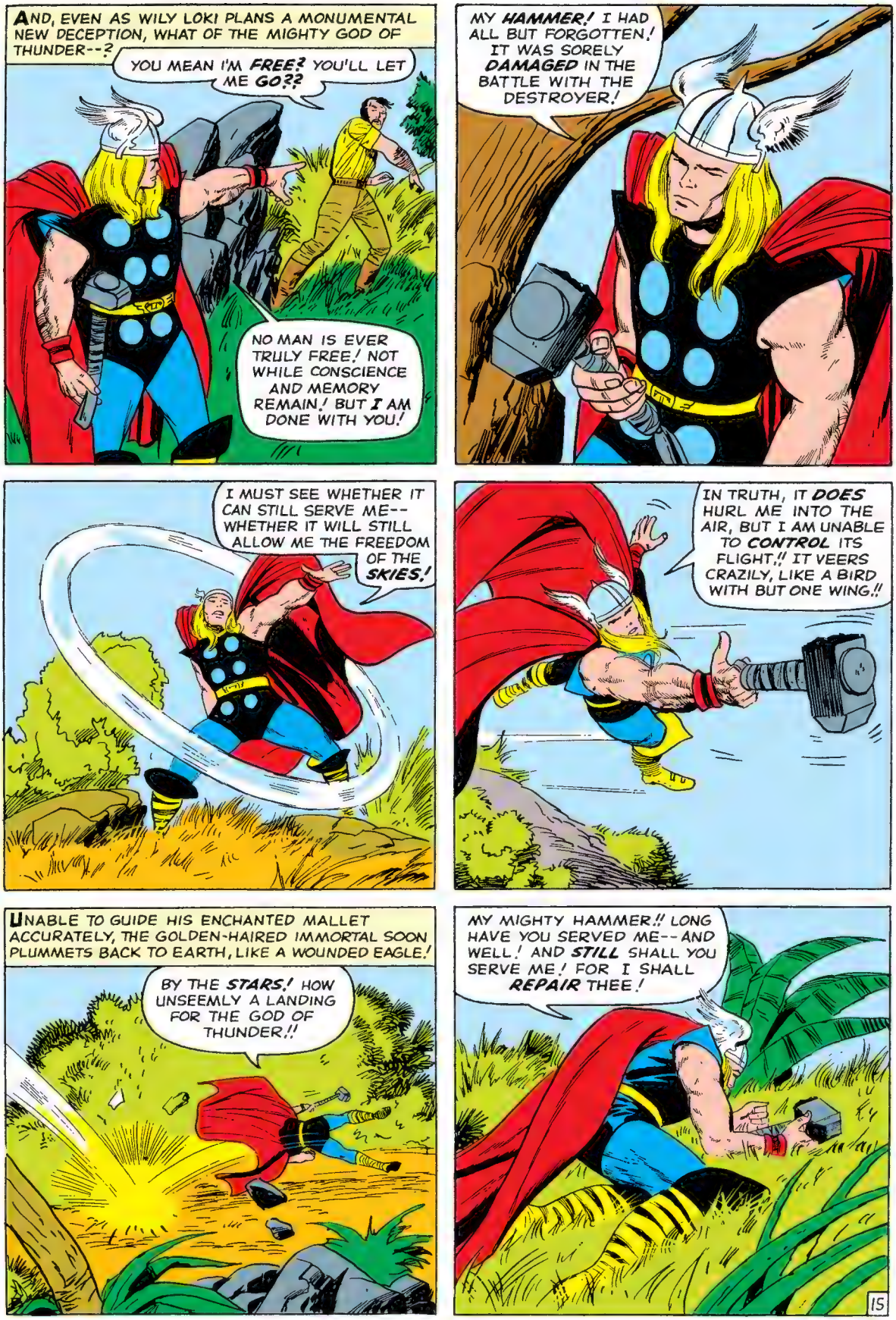
ON YOUR KNEES, MASTER OF TREACHERY!!
NOTHING SHALL SAVE YOU FROM MY ROYAL WRATH THIS DAY!
BY YOUR LEAVE, SIRE --THE PRISONER DID TRY TO AID THE THUNDER GOD!
HE BEGGED TO WAKEN YOU, BUT WAS REFUSED!

INDEED! CRAFTY TO THE END, ART THOU NOT? YOU KNEW THAT THE DEATH OF THOR WOULD MEAN YOUR OWN EXECUTION!
AND YET, I DO CALL THEE SON! I CANNOT FIND IT IN MY HEART TO BE MERCILESS TO THEE!

ATTEND MY WORDS! THIS SENTENCE DO I NOW PRONOUNCE--
I BIND THEE IN SERVITUDE TO ULARIC, MY ROYAL WARLOCK,* YOU SHALL LABOR FOR HIM TILL IT PLEASES ME TO RELEASE YOU!
NOW, GO THOU--!
*FOR THOSE FEW OF YOU WHO'VE NEVER BEEN TO ASGARD, WE HASTEN TO EXPLAIN THAT A WARLOCK IS ANOTHER NAME FOR WIZARD, OR SORCERER!--HELPFUL STAN.


I AM FORTUNATE TO HAVE ESCAPED WITH MY LIFE! AND YET, I AM NO HUMBLE PEASANT, TO BE APPRENTICED TO THE ROYAL WARLOCK! I AM LOKI, PRINCE OF EVIL!

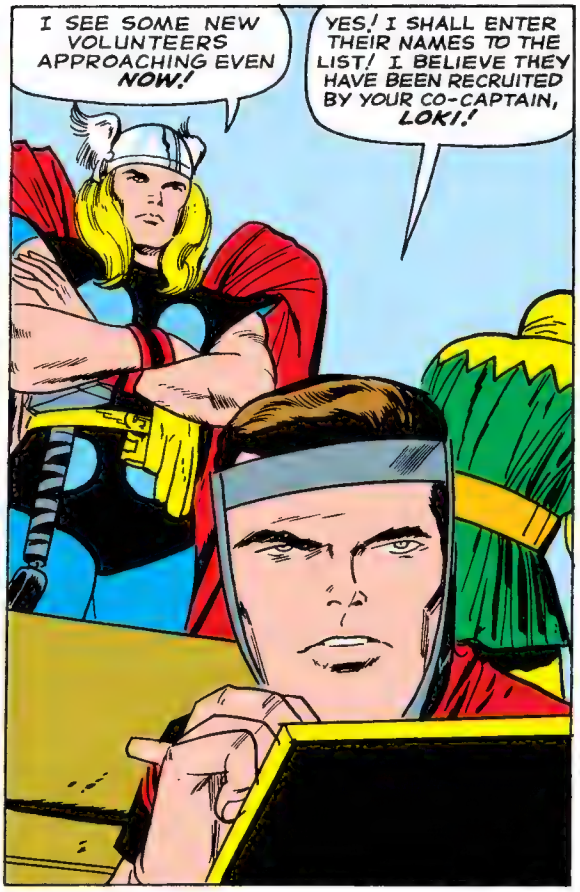

WHILE I LIVE, I SHALL PLAN-- I SHALL SCHEME-- I SHALL CONSPIRE!
BUT, THOR STILL POSSESSES MY MYSTIC NORN STONES! THEY ARE EVIDENCE OF MY PAST TREACHERY! HE MUST NEVER BE ALLOWED TO BRING THEM TO ODIN!!


AND, EVEN AS WILY LOKI PLANS A MONUMENTAL NEW DECEPTION, WHAT OF THE MIGHTY GOD OF THUNDER--?
YOU MEAN I'M FREE? YOU'LL LET ME GO??
NO MAN IS EVER TRULY FREE! NOT WHILE CONSCIENCE AND MEMORY REMAIN! BUT I AM DONE WITH YOU!
MY HAMMER! I HAD ALL BUT FORGOTTEN! IT WAS SORELY DAMAGED IN THE BATTLE WITH THE DESTROYER!
I MUST SEE WHETHER IT CAN STILL SERVE ME-- WHETHER IT WILL STILL ALLOW ME THE FREEDOM OF THE SKIES!
IN TRUTH, IT DOES HURL ME INTO THE AIR, BUT I AM UNABLE TO CONTROL ITS FLIGHT!! IT VEERS CRAZILY, LIKE A BIRD WITH BUT ONE WING!!
UNABLE TO GUIDE HIS ENCHANTED MALLET ACCURATELY, THE GOLDEN-HAIRED IMMORTAL SOON PLUMMETS BACK TO EARTH, LIKE A WOUNDED EAGLE!
BY THE STARS! HOW UNSEEMLY A LANDING FOR THE GOD OF THUNDER!!
MY MIGHTY HAMMER!! LONG HAVE YOU SERVED ME--AND WELL! AND STILL SHALL YOU SERVE ME! FOR I SHALL REPAIR THEE!
15

BUT, I MUST REACH AMERICA! I MUST FIND A FORGE--THE MIGHTIEST FORGE IN ALL THE LAND!
THOUGH MY HAMMER CANNOT TRANSPORT ME, I HAVE SOMETHING THAT WILL!
ONE OF LOKI'S NORN STONES--THE ONE CONTAINING THE POWER OF LEVITATION!
AS IT SERVED MY HALF-BROTHER, SO NOW SHALL IT SERVE THOR!
FOR MY LONGING IS TOO GREAT TO BE DENIED!!
SOON SHALL I FIND A FORGE WITH WHICH TO REPAIR MY MALLET!
THEN WILL I JOURNEY BACK TO ASGARD!
AND, WHEN I RETURN, THERE SHALL BE A FINAL RECKONING BETWEEN LOKI AND ME!
BUT, THOR DOES NOT SUSPECT THAT LOKI, EVEN NOW, IS THE LOWLY HELPER OF ULARIC, THE ROYAL WARLOCK--!
LOKI! FETCH ME YONDER VAT--AND MAKE HASTE!
HE DARES SPEAK THUS TO ME?!
IN THIS CHAMBER OF MIRACLES--OF WONDERS FROM ALL THE REALM--I SHALL NOT BE A SERVANT FOR LONG--!
FOR, ALREADY HAVE I CONCEIVED THE MOST CUNNING, THE MOST DARING PLAN OF ALL!
SOON IT SHALL BE ME, NOT ODIN, WHO IS MASTER OF ASGARD, WHILE THOR LIES HELPLESS, AT MY FEET!!
MIRACLES SHALL PASS BEFORE YOUR EYES IN THE ISSUES THAT FOLLOW! YOU MUST NOT MISS A SINGLE ONE! THE RAINBOW BRIDGE BECKONS! WE HAVE SPOKEN!
16

Tales of ASGARD
HOME OF THE MIGHTY NORSE GODS!
"GATHER, WARRIORS!"
WRITTEN WITH GALLANTRY BY STAN LEE
DRAWN WITH GREATNESS BY JACK KIRBY
INKED WITH GRANDEUR BY VINCE COLLETTA
LETTERED WITH A STRAIGHT FACE BY ARTIE SIMEK
THE MISSION OF MISSIONS IS ABOUT TO BEGIN!! WITH AN ARMY OF PICKED WARRIORS, MIGHTY THOR PREPARES TO SAIL INTO THE UNKNOWN, TO LEARN WHAT DREAD POWER HAS CAUSED A CRACK IN ODIN'S ENCHANTED OVERSWORD OF ASGARD! FOR, IF THE CRACK SHOULD GROW ANY LARGER, THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE MAY BE DESTROYED!
1

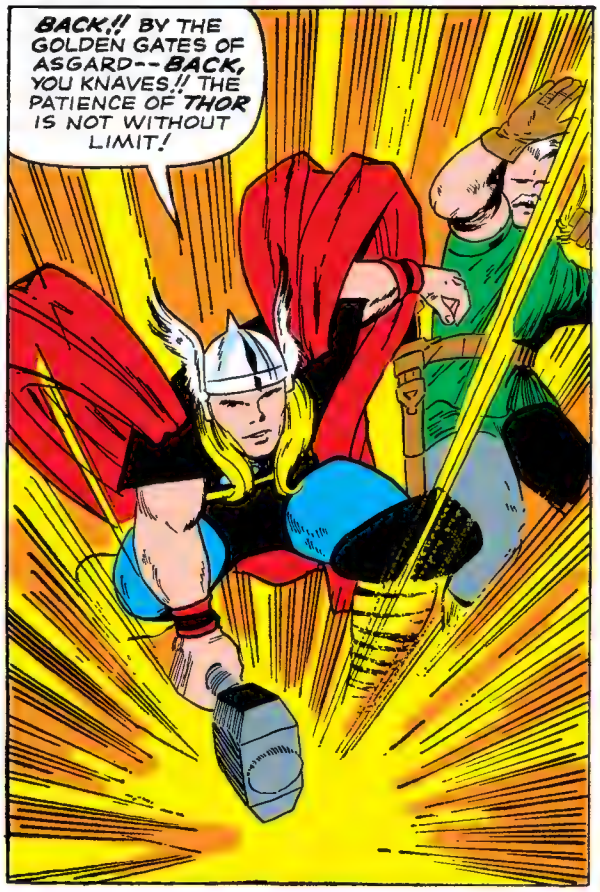
WHEN WILL WE BE READY TO SAIL, BALDER? MY LIMBS ACHE FOR ACTION!
SOON, MY FRIEND-- SOON!
THERE ARE STILL MORE WARRIORS TO BE ACCOUNTED FOR!

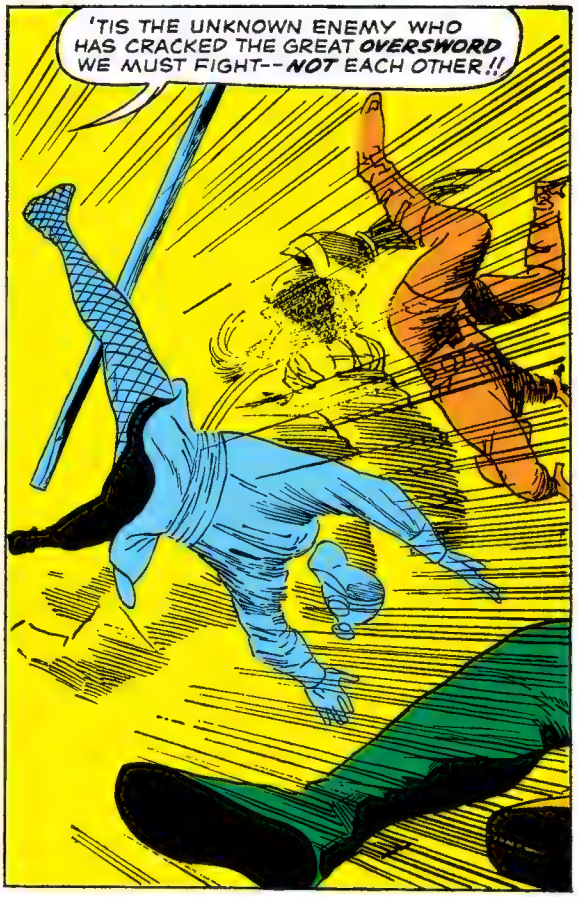

I SEE SOME NEW VOLUNTEERS APPROACHING EVEN NOW!
YES! I SHALL ENTER THEIR NAMES TO THE LIST! I BELIEVE THEY HAVE BEEN RECRUITED BY YOUR CO-CAPTAIN, LOKI!

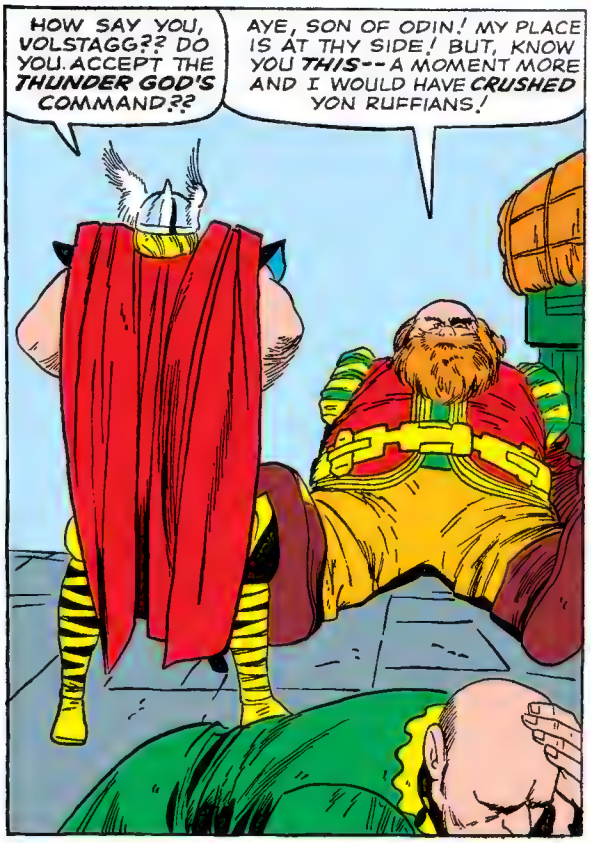
MAKE WAY FOR HOGUN, THE GRIM! I COME TO JOIN THE GREAT MISSION!
HOGUN-- THE SILENT, SINISTER, MYSTERY WARRIOR! NONE CAN PROBE HIS INNERMOST THOUGHTS!

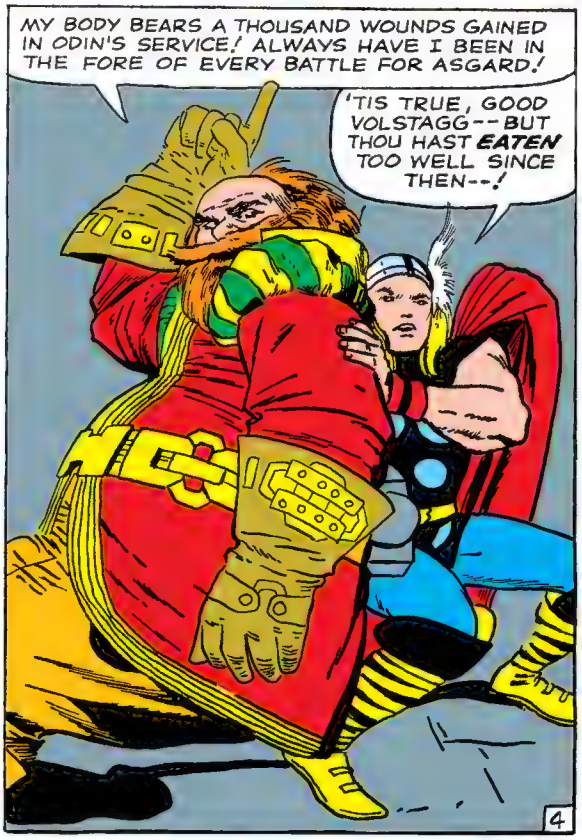
AND I SEE FANDRAL, THE DASHING, JOINING OUR RANKS!
AYE! AS WELL AS KRODA, THE DUELLIST, AND MAGRAT, THE SCHEMER! I TRUST THEM NOT, MIGHTY THOR!

THEY WILL CARE MORE ABOUT THE REWARDS WHICH LOKI HAS OFFERED THEM, THAN ABOUT THE MISSION ITSELF! AND--HOLD!! WHAT IS THIS?!!
A BRAWL!! THE NEW CREWMEN ARE FIGHTING AMONGST THEMSELVES!
BUT, WHO WOULD DARE BE GUILTY OF SUCH CONDUCT WITHIN THE SIGHT AND HEARING OF THOR?
AHH, I MIGHT HAVE GUESSED!
IT IS VOLSTAGG, THE ENORMOUS! VOLSTAGG, THE BLUSTERING, BOASTING GIANT OF A WARRIOR!
HAVE AT YOU, PUNY SCOUNDRELS! STAND ASIDE FOR VOLSTAGG! BY MY SWORD, THERE SHALL BE MANY A FLATTENED HEAD THIS DAY!!
3


BACK!! BY THE GOLDEN GATES OF ASGARD--BACK, YOU KNAVES!! THE PATIENCE OF THOR IS NOT WITHOUT LIMIT!

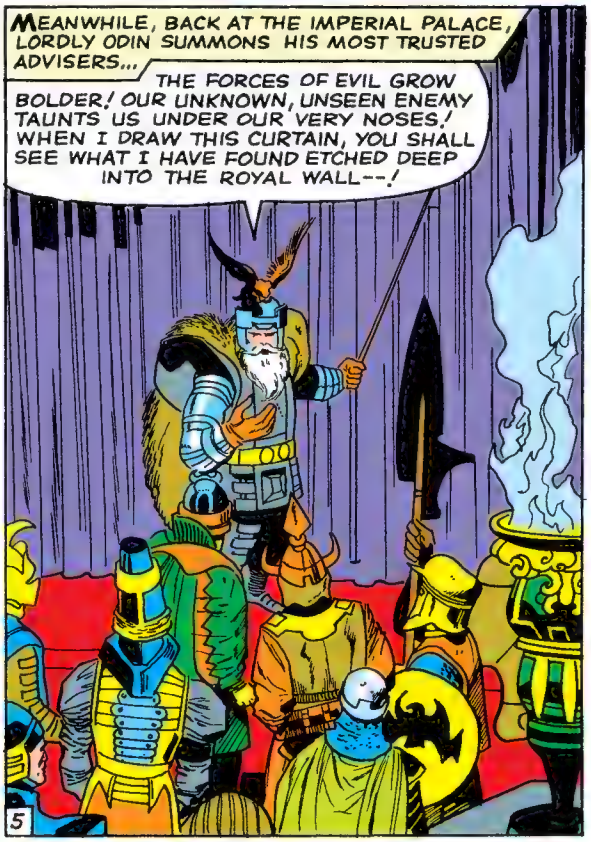

'TIS THE UNKNOWN ENEMY WHO HAS CRACKED THE GREAT OVERSWORD WE MUST FIGHT--NOT EACH OTHER!!


HOW SAY YOU, VOLSTAGG?? DO YOU ACCEPT THE THUNDER GOD'S COMMAND??
AYE, SON OF ODIN! MY PLACE IS AT THY SIDE! BUT, KNOW YOU THIS--A MOMENT MORE AND I WOULD HAVE CRUSHED YON RUFFIANS!


MY BODY BEARS A THOUSAND WOUNDS GAINED IN ODIN'S SERVICE! ALWAYS HAVE I BEEN IN THE FORE OF EVERY BATTLE FOR ASGARD!
'TIS TRUE, GOOD VOLSTAGG--BUT THOU HAST EATEN TOO WELL SINCE THEN--!

YET, FOR ALL THY STOUTNESS, I DO NOT DOUBT THE TRUE LOYALTY OF THEE, VOLSTAGG!
ODD'S BLOOD!! NONE BUT MIGHTY THOR COULD CALL VOLSTAGG STOUT!! 'TIS BUT MY MUSCLES THAT HAVE GROWN MORE ROUND!

I SHALL SHOW THESE RABBLE HOW A TRUE WARRIOR FIGHTS!! I SHALL BE IN THE FOREFRONT OF EACH ATTACK! DEATH TO THE FORCES OF EVIL!! VICTORY TO ETERNAL ASGARD!
AHHH, BLUSTERING VOLSTAGG! METHINKS YOU MOSTLY WISH A BRIEF VACATION FROM YOUR WIFE AND FIFTEEN OFFSPRING!
MAKE READY TO RAISE ANCHOR! WE SAIL WITH THE TIDE!


MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE IMPERIAL PALACE, LORDLY ODIN SUMMONS HIS MOST TRUSTED ADVISERS...
THE FORCES OF EVIL GROW BOLDER! OUR UNKNOWN, UNSEEN ENEMY TAUNTS US UNDER OUR VERY NOSES! WHEN I DRAW THIS CURTAIN, YOU SHALL SEE WHAT I HAVE FOUND ETCHED DEEP INTO THE ROYAL WALL--!

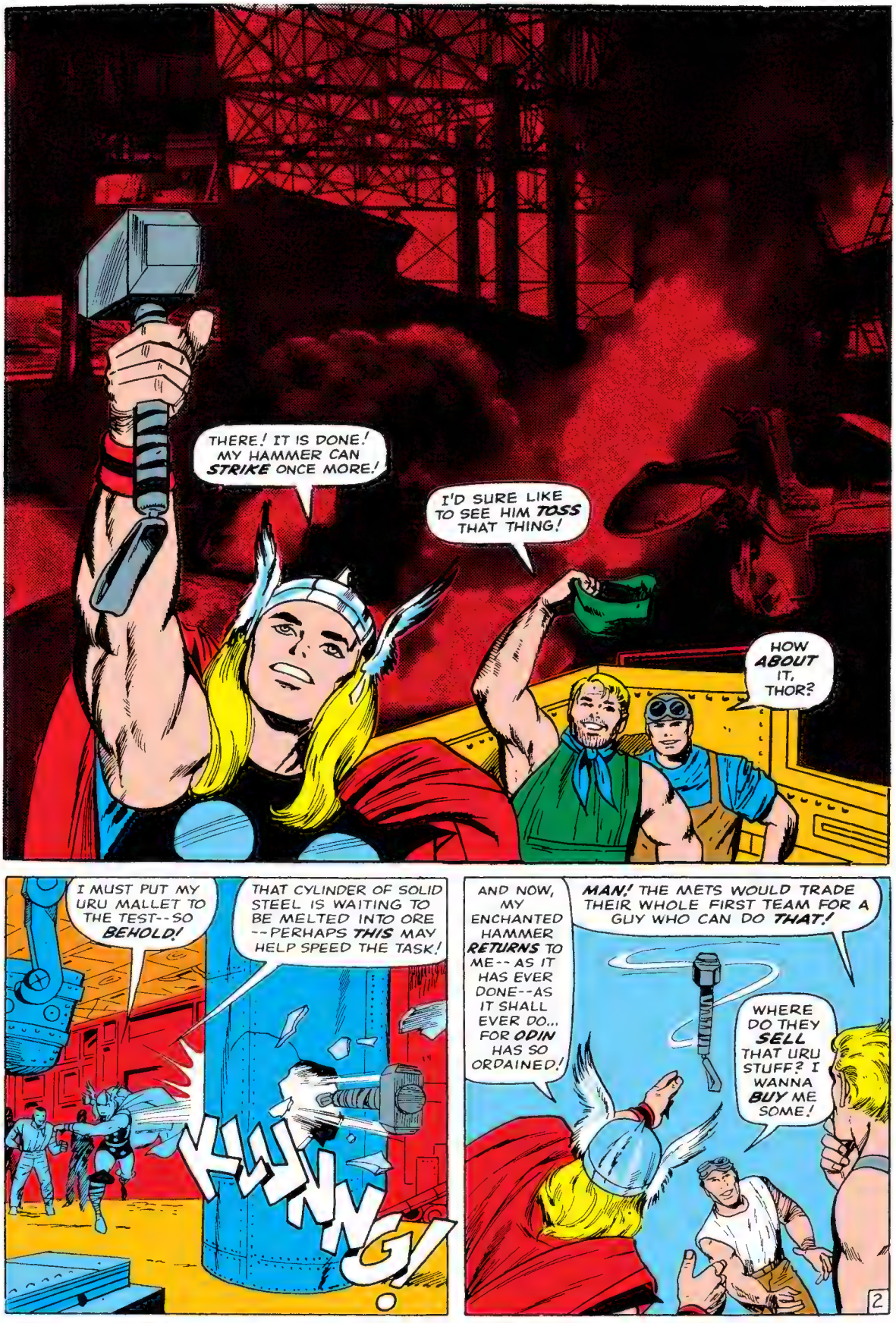
AND THERE, FOR ALL TO SEE, THE THREE MOST FEARFUL WORDS OF ALL TIME-- THE WORDS ANNOUNCING RAGNAROK, THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS-- THE DAY THE WORLD WILL PERISH!

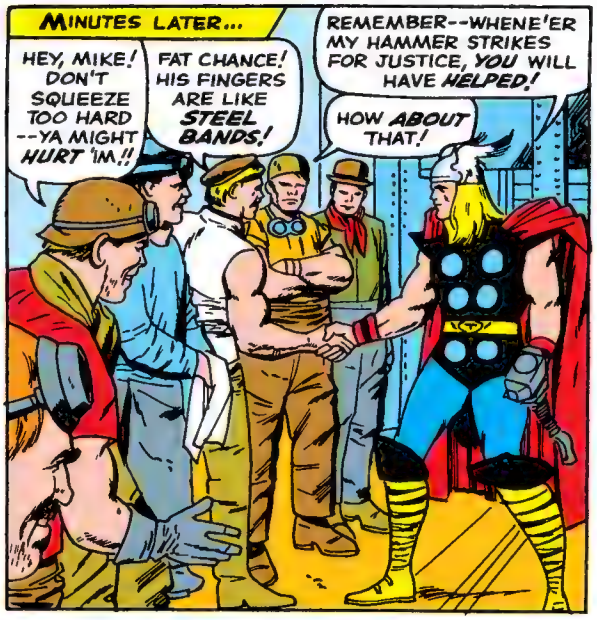
RAGNAROK IS COMING
LET US PRAY THAT THOR'S MISSION FINDS OUR ENEMIES-- AND DESTROYS THEM! FOR, IF HE DOES NOT--ASGARD IS DOOMED!
THE END

RAGNAROK, THE DAY OF THE LAST GREAT BATTLE--THE DAY IN WHICH IT HAS BEEN WRITTEN THE GODS THEMSELVES WILL PERISH! RAGNAROK, THE ONLY MOMENT THAT ODIN HIMSELF AWAITS WITH FEAR AND DREAD! IS RAGNAROK TRULY UPON US?? BY THE BRISTLING BEARD OF ODIN, WE SHALL LEARN MORE NEXT ISSUE! SO BE IT!

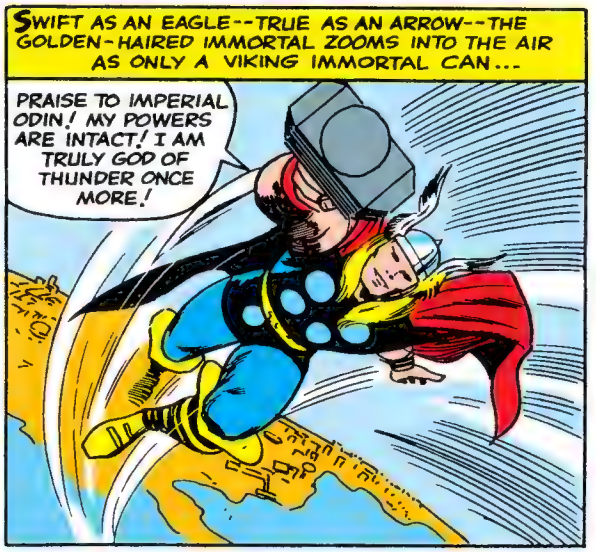
JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY
WITH
THE MIGHTY
THOR
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
IND.
MARVEL POP ART PRODUCTIONS
12¢
120
SEPT
"IN MY HAND ...THIS HAMMER!"

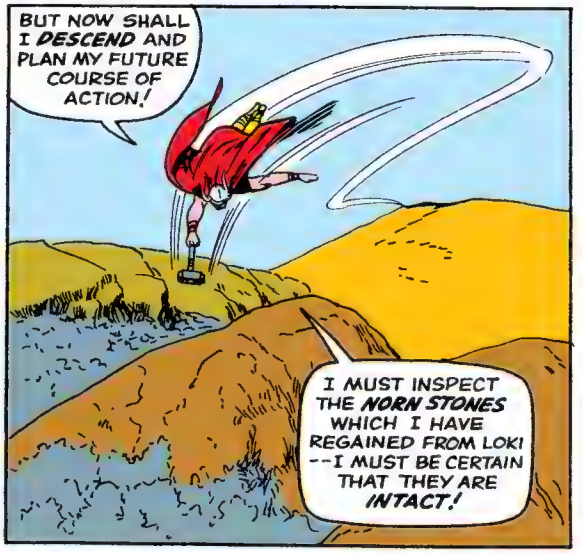
THE MIGHTY THOR!
"WITH MY HAMMER IN HAND...!"
I KNEW THAT HERE IN THE GREAT BLAST FURNACES OF PITTSBURGH I WOULD FIND A GIANT FORGE TO MEND MY HAMMER!
THOR DID IN AN HOUR WHAT WOULD HAVE TAKEN US A MONTH!
WHEW! I CAN ALMOST BELIEVE HE IS THE GOD OF THUNDER!
WRITTEN IN THE FIRE OF INSPIRATION BY.... STAN LEE
DRAWN IN THE FLAME OF DEDICATION BY.... JACK KIRBY
INKED IN THE HEAT OF DEVOTION BY..... VINCE COLLETTA
LETTERED IN THE OTHER ROOM BY..... ARTIE SIMEK
1

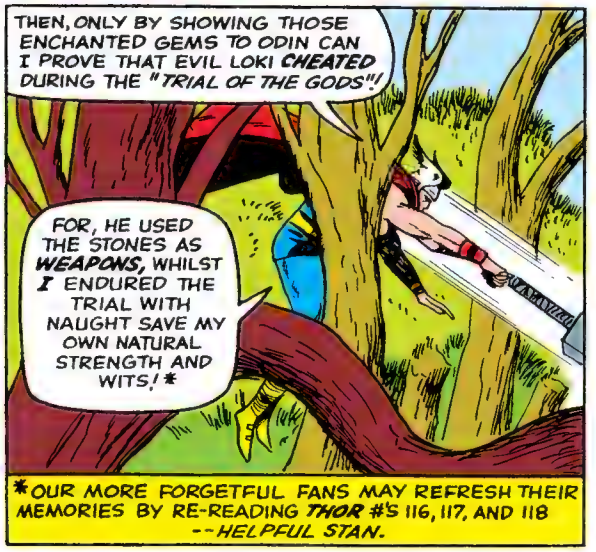

THERE! IT IS DONE! MY HAMMER CAN STRIKE ONCE MORE!
I'D SURE LIKE TO SEE HIM TOSS THAT THING!
HOW ABOUT IT, THOR?
I MUST PUT MY URU MALLET TO THE TEST--SO BEHOLD!
THAT CYLINDER OF SOLID STEEL IS WAITING TO BE MELTED INTO ORE --PERHAPS THIS MAY HELP SPEED THE TASK!
KLANNG!
AND NOW, MY ENCHANTED HAMMER RETURNS TO ME-- AS IT HAS EVER DONE--AS IT SHALL EVER DO... FOR ODIN HAS SO ORDAINED!
MAN! THE METS WOULD TRADE THEIR WHOLE FIRST TEAM FOR A GUY WHO CAN DO THAT!
WHERE DO THEY SELL THAT URU STUFF? I WANNA BUY ME SOME!
2

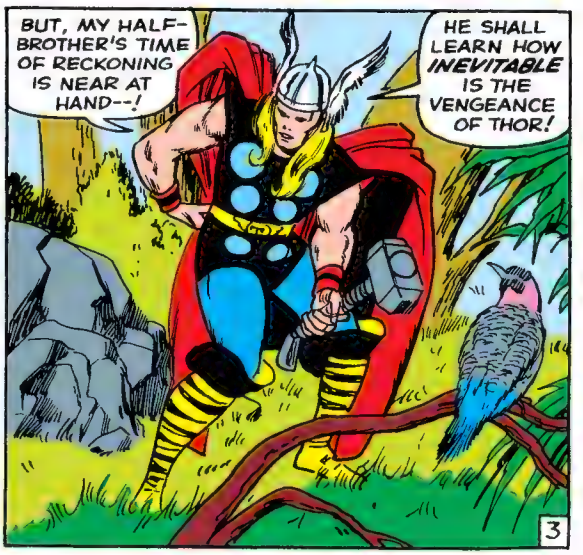

MINUTES LATER...
HEY, MIKE! DON'T SQUEEZE TOO HARD --YA MIGHT HURT 'IM!!
FAT CHANCE! HIS FINGERS ARE LIKE STEEL BANDS!
REMEMBER--WHENE'ER MY HAMMER STRIKES FOR JUSTICE, YOU WILL HAVE HELPED!
HOW ABOUT THAT!

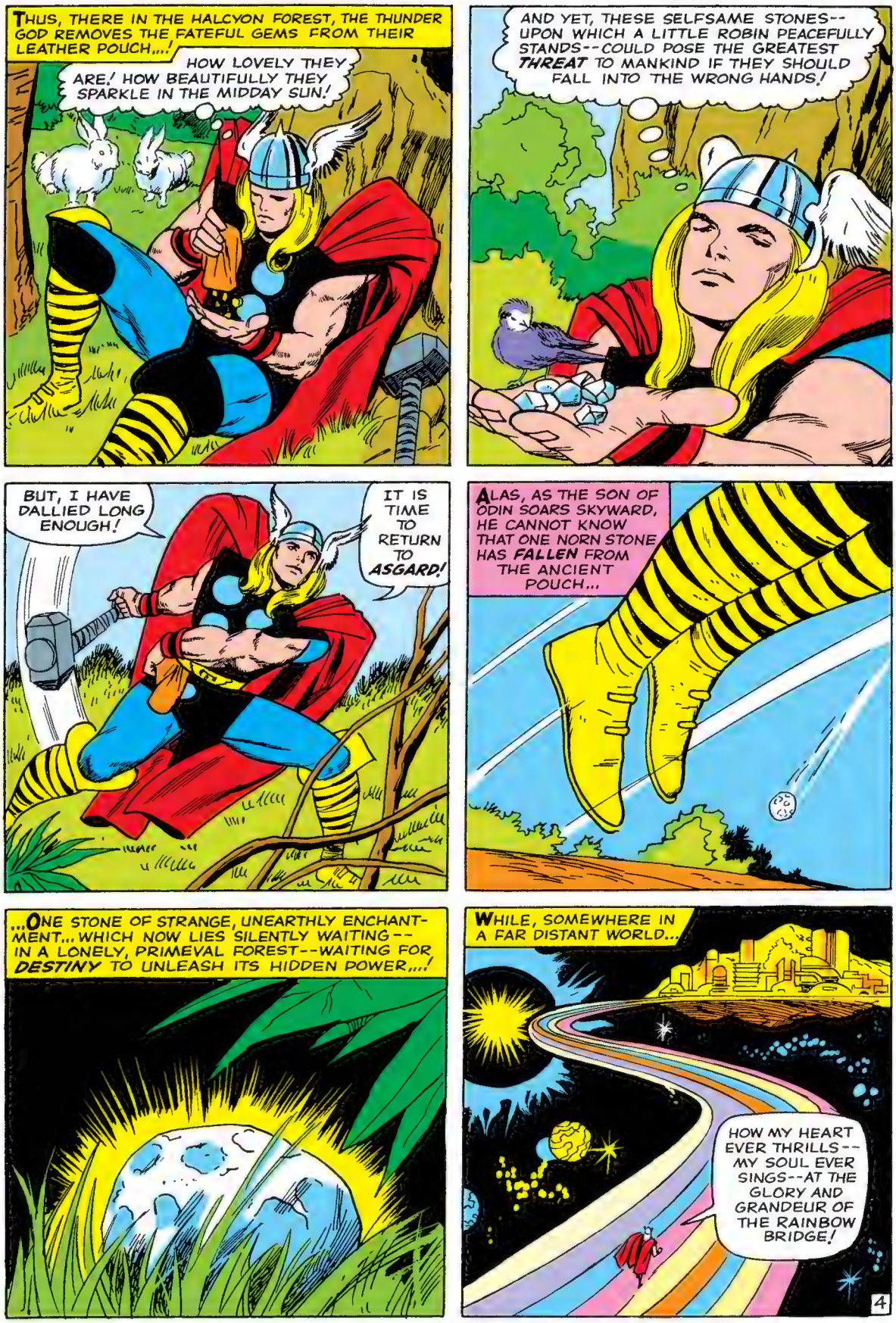
AND NOW FOR THE FINAL TEST-- WILL MY MALLET HURL ME UNERRINGLY INTO THE SKY?

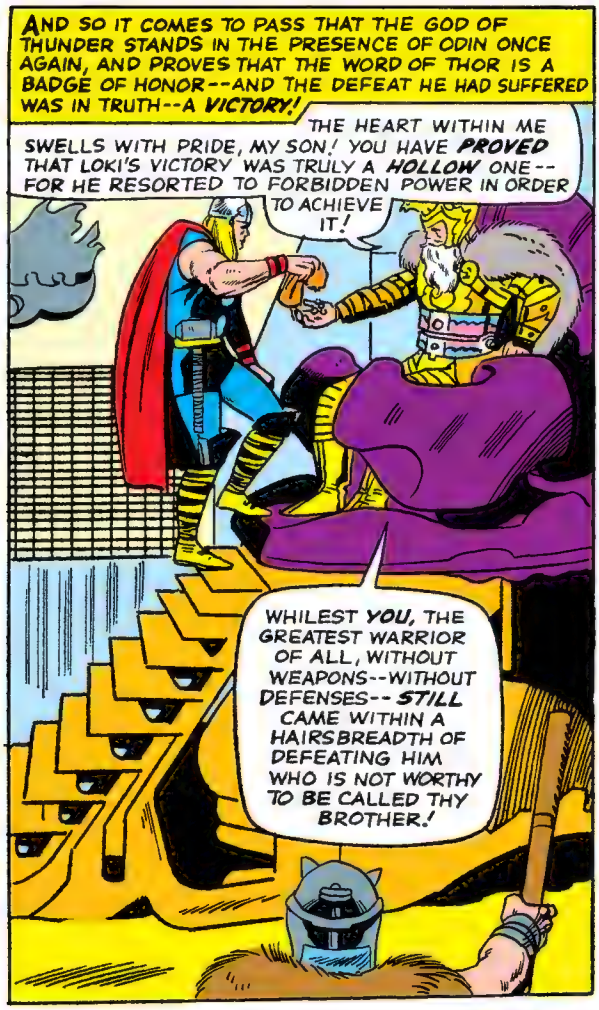

SWIFT AS AN EAGLE--TRUE AS AN ARROW--THE GOLDEN-HAIRED IMMORTAL ZOOMS INTO THE AIR AS ONLY A VIKING IMMORTAL CAN...
PRAISE TO IMPERIAL ODIN! MY POWERS ARE INTACT! I AM TRULY GOD OF THUNDER ONCE MORE!

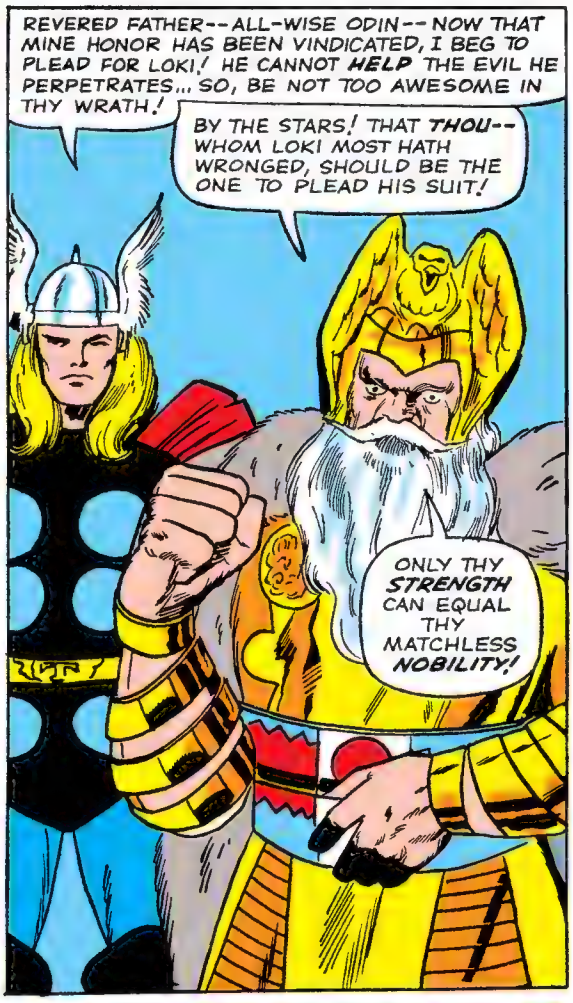

BUT NOW SHALL I DESCEND AND PLAN MY FUTURE COURSE OF ACTION!
I MUST INSPECT THE NORN STONES WHICH I HAVE REGAINED FROM LOKI --I MUST BE CERTAIN THAT THEY ARE INTACT!

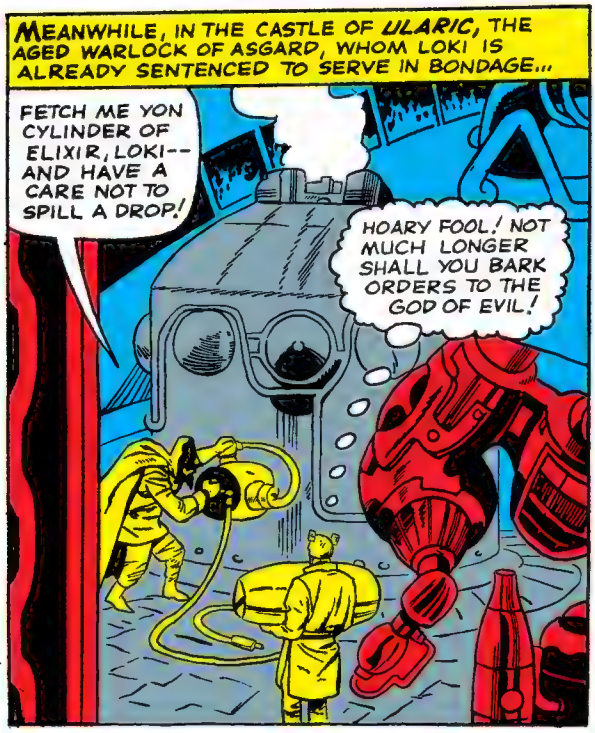

THEN, ONLY BY SHOWING THOSE ENCHANTED GEMS TO ODIN CAN I PROVE THAT EVIL LOKI CHEATED DURING THE "TRIAL OF THE GODS"!
FOR, HE USED THE STONES AS WEAPONS, WHILST I ENDURED THE TRIAL WITH NAUGHT SAVE MY OWN NATURAL STRENGTH AND WITS! *
*OUR MORE FORGETFUL FANS MAY REFRESH THEIR MEMORIES BY RE-READING THOR #'S 116, 117, AND 118 --HELPFUL STAN.


BUT, MY HALF-BROTHER'S TIME OF RECKONING IS NEAR AT HAND--!
HE SHALL LEARN HOW INEVITABLE IS THE VENGEANCE OF THOR!

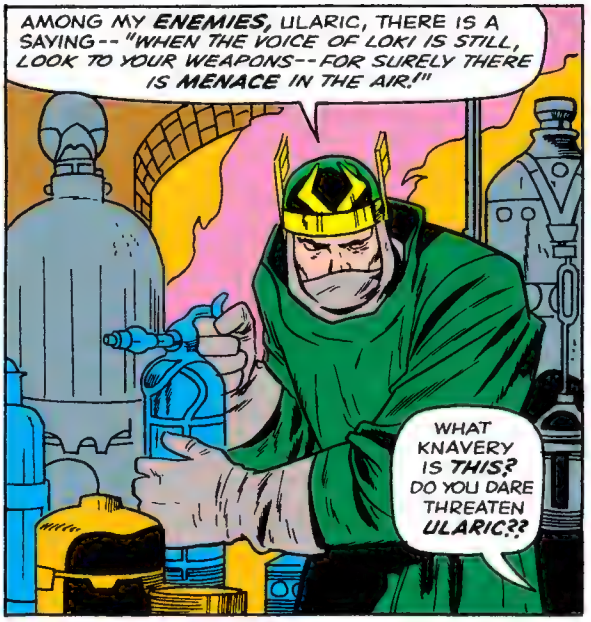

THUS, THERE IN THE HALCYON FOREST, THE THUNDER GOD REMOVES THE FATEFUL GEMS FROM THEIR LEATHER POUCH...!
HOW LOVELY THEY ARE! HOW BEAUTIFULLY THEY SPARKLE IN THE MIDDAY SUN!
AND YET, THESE SELFSAME STONES--UPON WHICH A LITTLE ROBIN PEACEFULLY STANDS--COULD POSE THE GREATEST THREAT TO MANKIND IF THEY SHOULD FALL INTO THE WRONG HANDS!
BUT, I HAVE DALLIED LONG ENOUGH!
IT IS TIME TO RETURN TO ASGARD!
ALAS, AS THE SON OF ODIN SOARS SKYWARD, HE CANNOT KNOW THAT ONE NORN STONE HAS FALLEN FROM THE ANCIENT POUCH...
...ONE STONE OF STRANGE, UNEARTHLY ENCHANTMENT...WHICH NOW LIES SILENTLY WAITING--IN A LONELY, PRIMEVAL FOREST--WAITING FOR DESTINY TO UNLEASH ITS HIDDEN POWER...!
WHILE, SOMEWHERE IN A FAR DISTANT WORLD...
HOW MY HEART EVER THRILLS--MY SOUL EVER SINGS--AT THE GLORY AND GRANDEUR OF THE RAINBOW BRIDGE!


AND SO IT COMES TO PASS THAT THE GOD OF THUNDER STANDS IN THE PRESENCE OF ODIN ONCE AGAIN, AND PROVES THAT THE WORD OF THOR IS A BADGE OF HONOR--AND THE DEFEAT HE HAD SUFFERED WAS IN TRUTH--A VICTORY!
THE HEART WITHIN ME SWELLS WITH PRIDE, MY SON! YOU HAVE PROVED THAT LOKI'S VICTORY WAS TRULY A HOLLOW ONE--FOR HE RESORTED TO FORBIDDEN POWER IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE IT!
WHILEST YOU, THE GREATEST WARRIOR OF ALL, WITHOUT WEAPONS--WITHOUT DEFENSES--STILL CAME WITHIN A HAIRSBREADTH OF DEFEATING HIM WHO IS NOT WORTHY TO BE CALLED THY BROTHER!

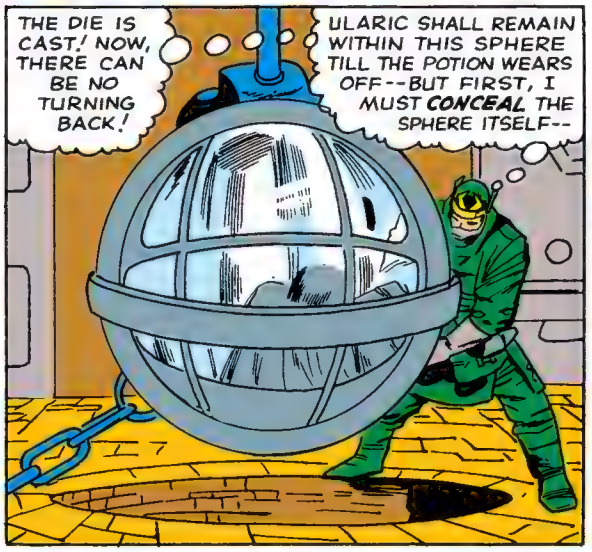

REVERED FATHER--ALL-WISE ODIN--NOW THAT MINE HONOR HAS BEEN VINDICATED, I BEG TO PLEAD FOR LOKI! HE CANNOT HELP THE EVIL HE PERPETRATES... SO, BE NOT TOO AWESOME IN THY WRATH!
BY THE STARS! THAT THOU--WHOM LOKI MOST HATH WRONGED, SHOULD BE THE ONE TO PLEAD HIS SUIT!
ONLY THY STRENGTH CAN EQUAL THY MATCHLESS NOBILITY!

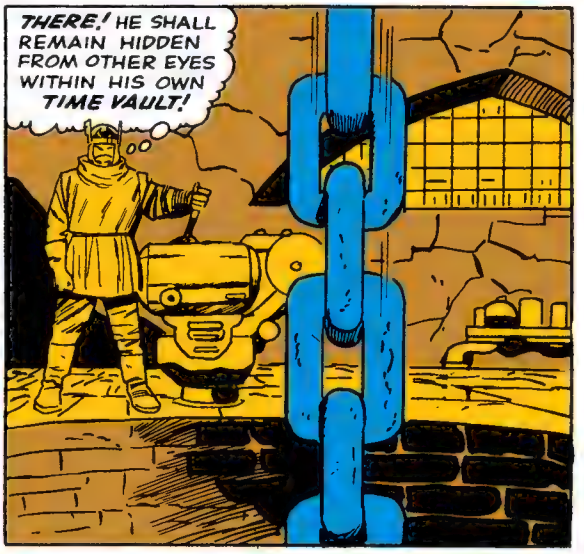

MEANWHILE, IN THE CASTLE OF ULARIC, THE AGED WARLOCK OF ASGARD, WHOM LOKI IS ALREADY SENTENCED TO SERVE IN BONDAGE...
FETCH ME YON CYLINDER OF ELIXIR, LOKI--AND HAVE A CARE NOT TO SPILL A DROP!
HOARY FOOL! NOT MUCH LONGER SHALL YOU BARK ORDERS TO THE GOD OF EVIL!

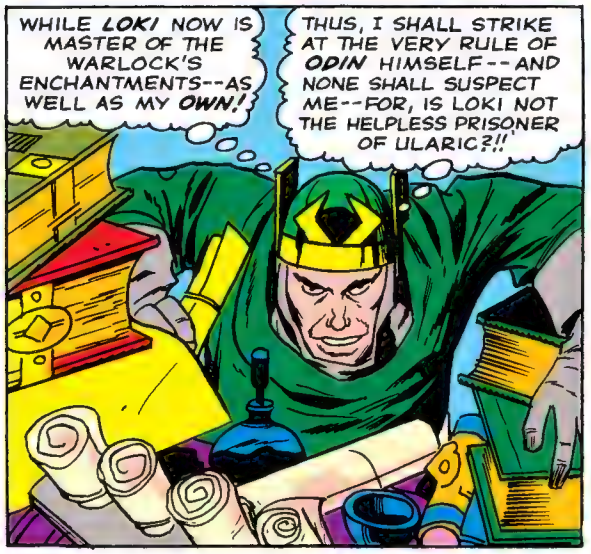
THOUGH IT MEANS DEFYING THE SENTENCE OF ODIN HIMSELF, I CAN ENDURE THIS HUMILIATION NO LONGER! AM I NOT THE EQUAL OF THOR IN LINEAGE--IN TITLE--IN CUNNING--AND YEA, EVEN IN POWER--FOR MINE IS THE ULTIMATE POWER OF SORCERY!
WHY SO SILENT, EVIL ONE?

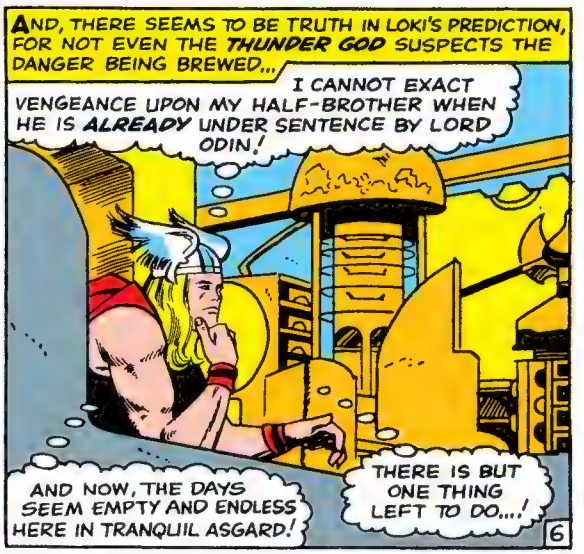

AMONG MY ENEMIES, ULARIC, THERE IS A SAYING -- "WHEN THE VOICE OF LOKI IS STILL, LOOK TO YOUR WEAPONS -- FOR SURELY THERE IS MENACE IN THE AIR!"
WHAT KNAVERY IS THIS? DO YOU DARE THREATEN ULARIC??

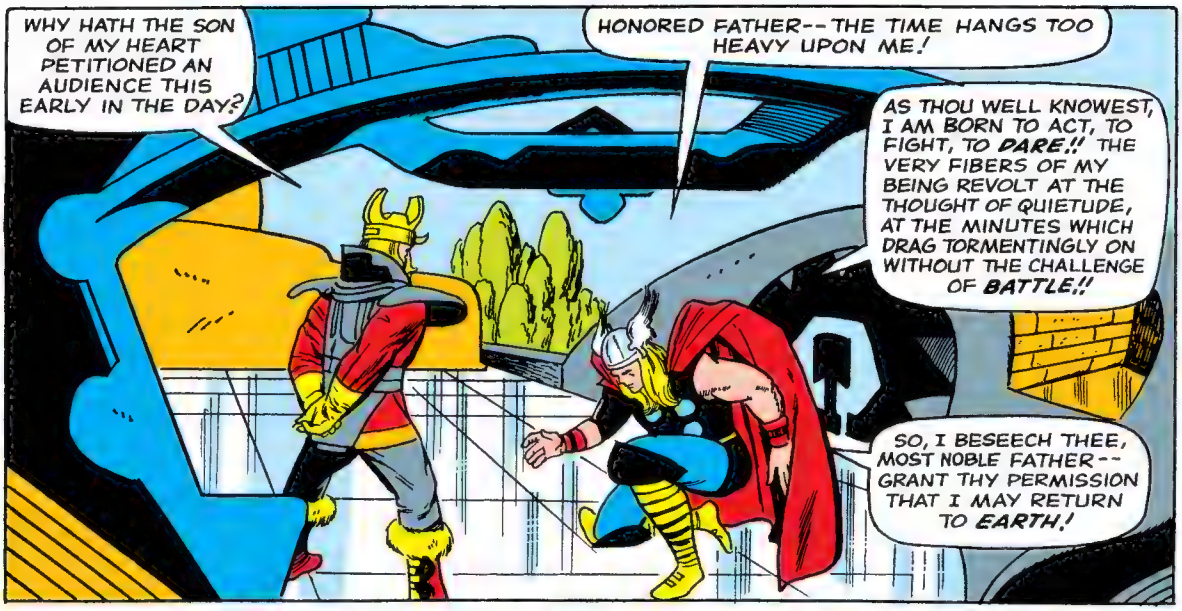
THE GOD OF EVIL WASTES NO TIME WITH MERE IDLE THREATS!
BY USING YOUR OWN POTIONS, UNKNOWN TO YOU, I HAVE CREATED A SUSPENDED ANIMATION MIST -- AND SO DOES LOKI GAIN HIS FREEDOM!
FOOL! WHEN ODIN LEARNS WHAT YOU -- UHHH!
BY THEN IT SHALL BE TOO LATE!

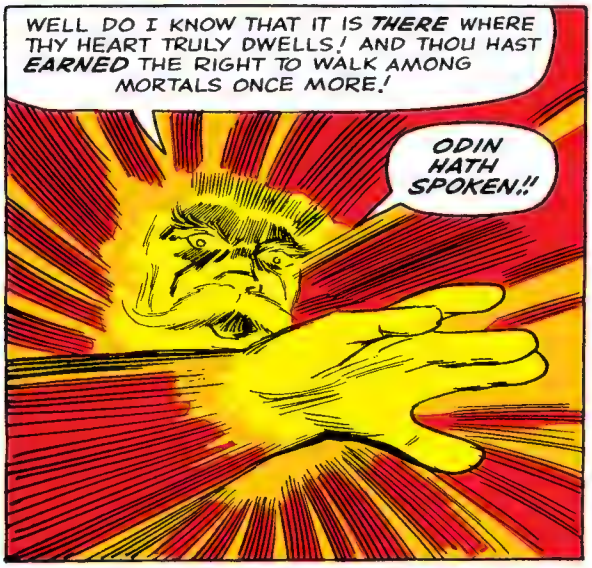

THE DIE IS CAST! NOW, THERE CAN BE NO TURNING BACK!
ULARIC SHALL REMAIN WITHIN THIS SPHERE TILL THE POTION WEARS OFF -- BUT FIRST, I MUST CONCEAL THE SPHERE ITSELF --

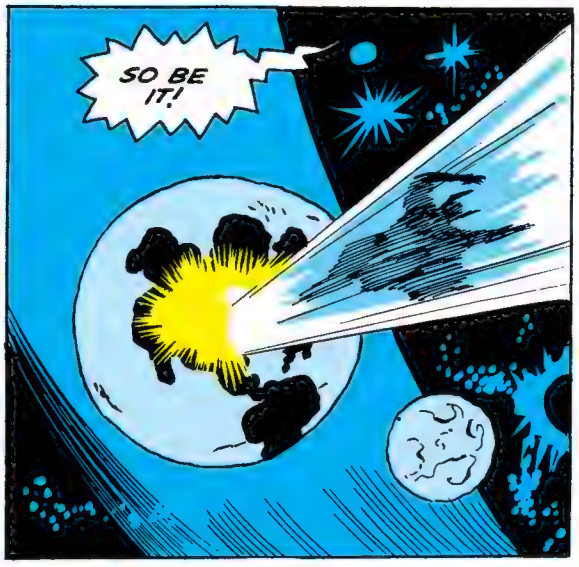

THERE! HE SHALL REMAIN HIDDEN FROM OTHER EYES WITHIN HIS OWN TIME VAULT!

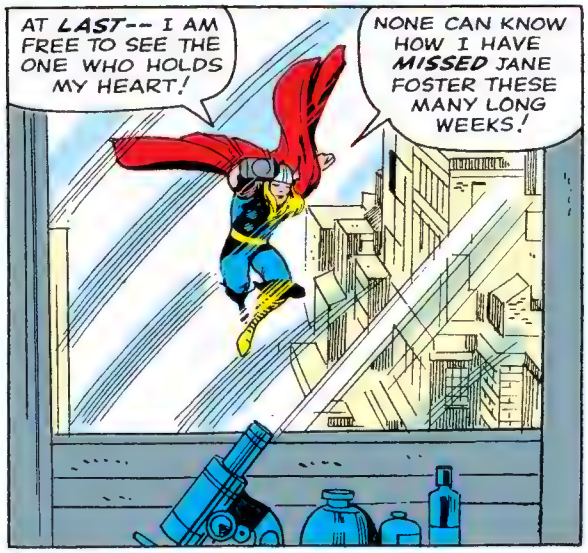

WHILE LOKI NOW IS MASTER OF THE WARLOCK'S ENCHANTMENTS -- AS WELL AS MY OWN!
THUS, I SHALL STRIKE AT THE VERY RULE OF ODIN HIMSELF -- AND NONE SHALL SUSPECT ME -- FOR, IS LOKI NOT THE HELPLESS PRISONER OF ULARIC?!!

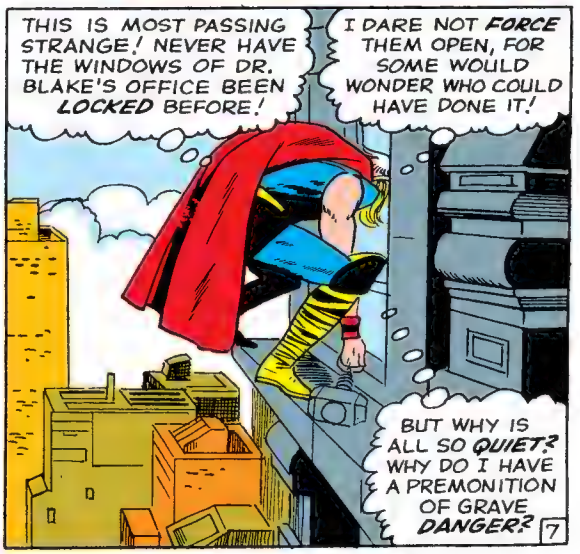

AND, THERE SEEMS TO BE TRUTH IN LOKI'S PREDICTION, FOR NOT EVEN THE THUNDER GOD SUSPECTS THE DANGER BEING BREWED...
I CANNOT EXACT VENGEANCE UPON MY HALF-BROTHER WHEN HE IS ALREADY UNDER SENTENCE BY LORD ODIN!
AND NOW, THE DAYS SEEM EMPTY AND ENDLESS HERE IN TRANQUIL ASGARD!
THERE IS BUT ONE THING LEFT TO DO...!


WHY HATH THE SON OF MY HEART PETITIONED AN AUDIENCE THIS EARLY IN THE DAY?
HONORED FATHER--THE TIME HANGS TOO HEAVY UPON ME!
AS THOU WELL KNOWEST, I AM BORN TO ACT, TO FIGHT, TO DARE!! THE VERY FIBERS OF MY BEING REVOLT AT THE THOUGHT OF QUIETUDE, AT THE MINUTES WHICH DRAG TORMENTINGLY ON WITHOUT THE CHALLENGE OF BATTLE!!
SO, I BESEECH THEE, MOST NOBLE FATHER--GRANT THY PERMISSION THAT I MAY RETURN TO EARTH!

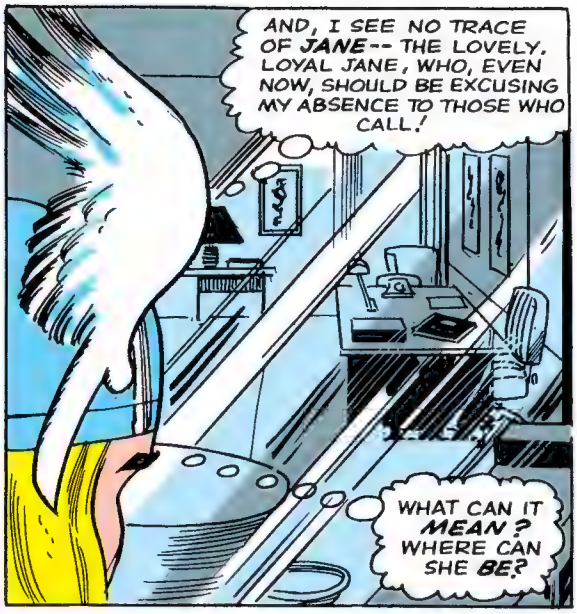

WELL DO I KNOW THAT IT IS THERE WHERE THY HEART TRULY DWELLS! AND THOU HAST EARNED THE RIGHT TO WALK AMONG MORTALS ONCE MORE!
ODIN HATH SPOKEN!!

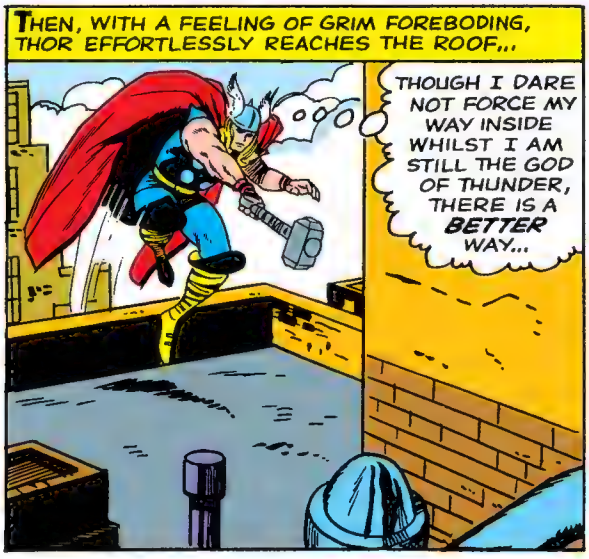

SO BE IT!

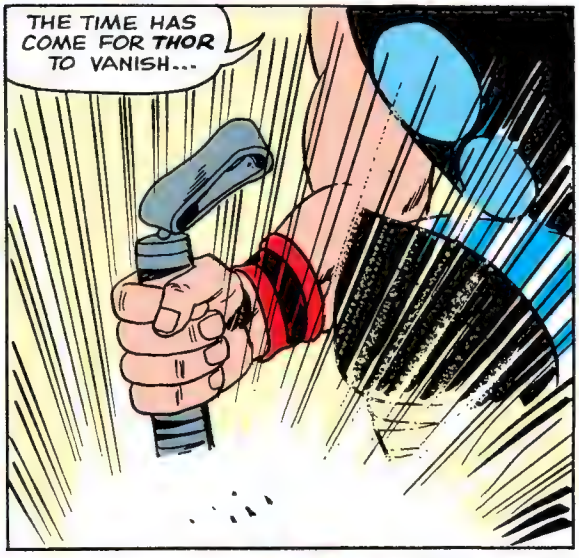

AT LAST-- I AM FREE TO SEE THE ONE WHO HOLDS MY HEART!
NONE CAN KNOW HOW I HAVE MISSED JANE FOSTER THESE MANY LONG WEEKS!

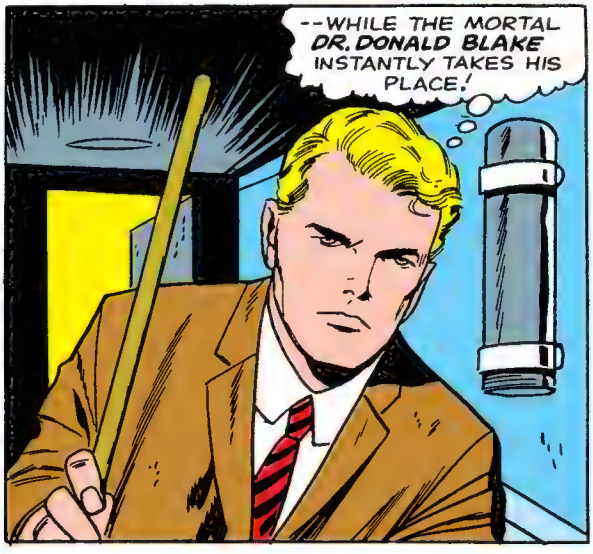

THIS IS MOST PASSING STRANGE! NEVER HAVE THE WINDOWS OF DR. BLAKE'S OFFICE BEEN LOCKED BEFORE!
I DARE NOT FORCE THEM OPEN, FOR SOME WOULD WONDER WHO COULD HAVE DONE IT!
BUT WHY IS ALL SO QUIET? WHY DO I HAVE A PREMONITION OF GRAVE DANGER?

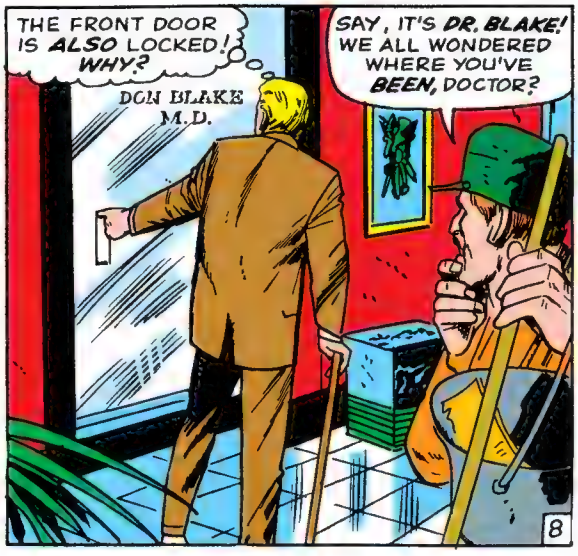
'TIS THE VERY MIDDLE OF DAY --WHEN THE OFFICE OF DR. BLAKE SHOULD BE FILLED WITH WAITING PATIENTS.!!
YES, IT IS STRANGELY BARE-- UNCOMMONLY DESERTED!


AND, I SEE NO TRACE OF JANE-- THE LOVELY, LOYAL JANE, WHO, EVEN NOW, SHOULD BE EXCUSING MY ABSENCE TO THOSE WHO CALL.!
WHAT CAN IT MEAN? WHERE CAN SHE BE?

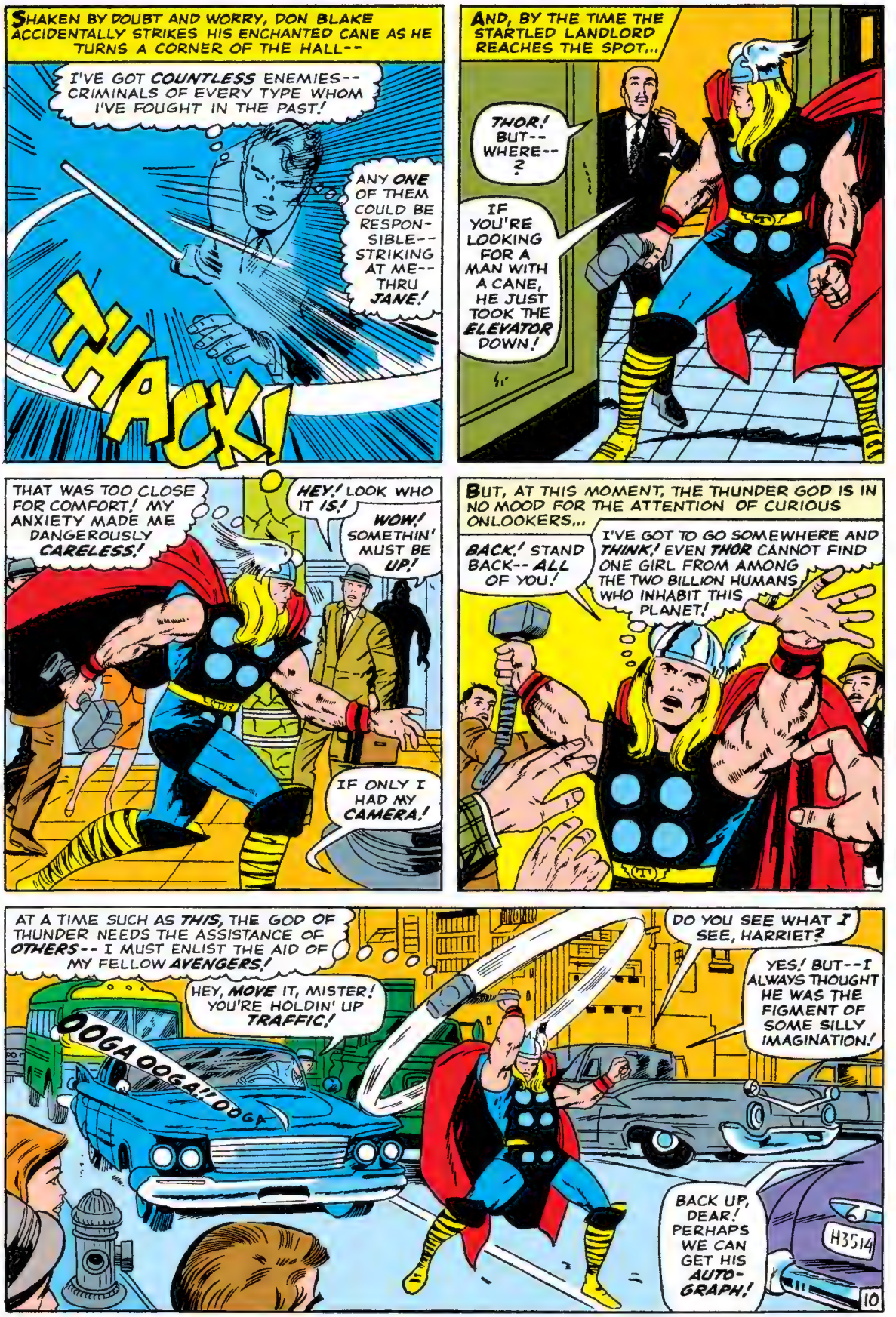

THEN, WITH A FEELING OF GRIM FOREBODING, THOR EFFORTLESSLY REACHES THE ROOF...
THOUGH I DARE NOT FORCE MY WAY INSIDE WHILST I AM STILL THE GOD OF THUNDER, THERE IS A BETTER WAY...


THE TIME HAS COME FOR THOR TO VANISH...


--WHILE THE MORTAL DR. DONALD BLAKE INSTANTLY TAKES HIS PLACE!


THE FRONT DOOR IS ALSO LOCKED! WHY?
DON BLAKE M.D.
SAY, IT'S DR. BLAKE! WE ALL WONDERED WHERE YOU'VE BEEN, DOCTOR?

THEN, AFTER THE JANITOR HAS UNLOCKED THE DOOR WITH HIS PASSKEY--
JANE WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE GENERAL HOSPITAL SEND ANOTHER DOCTOR TO LOOK AFTER MY PATIENTS WHILE I WAS GONE!
BUT, THE APPOINTMENT BOOK IS BLANK--AND MY OFFICE A SHAMBLES!
THE MEMO PADS ARE JUST EMPTY SHEETS! JANE WOULD NEVER HAVE LEFT WITHOUT LEAVING A NOTE! THERE'S ONLY ONE POSSIBLE ANSWER...
DR. BLAKE! I'VE BEEN WANTING TO SEE YOU! YOUR RENT BILL IS MONTHS OVERDUE, AND YOUR NURSE HASN'T BEEN HERE TO PAY IT FOR YOU!
THAT CINCHES IT! JANE WOULD NEVER FORGET TO PAY MY BILLS FOR ME! SOMETHING HAS HAPPENED TO HER!
NOW THEN, DOCTOR--IF YOU WOULD BE GOOD ENOUGH TO LET ME HAVE A CHECK FOR THE PAST DUE AMOUNT --?
HOW CAN YOU SPEAK OF MONEY AT A TIME LIKE THIS?!! JANE FOSTER IS MISSING-- VANISHED WITHOUT A TRACE-- WITHOUT THE SLIGHTEST POSSIBLE CLUE!
BUT, DR. BLAKE--!
YOU'LL GET YOUR RENT! BUT FIRST I'VE GOT TO LEARN WHAT HAPPENED TO JANE!
HERE COMES NORMA THAXTON, ONE OF MY PATIENTS! I CAN'T STOP TO SEE HER NOW!
MISS THAXTON, SOMETHING IMPORTANT HAS JUST COME UP! IF YOU CAN WAIT TILL TOMORROW--
DON'T RUSH ON MY ACCOUNT, DR. BLAKE! I'VE BEEN USING THE CHARMING NEW DOCTOR ACROSS THE HALL DURING YOUR ABSENCE!
AND I INTEND TO CONTINUE USING HIM! GOOD DAY!
SHE'S ANGRY-- AND I DON'T BLAME HER! HOW MANY MORE PATIENTS HAVE I LOST BECAUSE MY OFFICE HAS BEEN DESERTED?
NOW LOOK, DOCTOR-- I'VE GOT TO HAVE MY RENT BY THE END OF THE WEEK!
IT'S LIKE TALKING TO A WALL! HE DOESN'T EVEN HEAR ME!
9


SHAKEN BY DOUBT AND WORRY, DON BLAKE ACCIDENTALLY STRIKES HIS ENCHANTED CANE AS HE TURNS A CORNER OF THE HALL--
I'VE GOT COUNTLESS ENEMIES-- CRIMINALS OF EVERY TYPE WHOM I'VE FOUGHT IN THE PAST!
ANY ONE OF THEM COULD BE RESPONSIBLE-- STRIKING AT ME-- THRU JANE!
THACK!
AND, BY THE TIME THE STARTLED LANDLORD REACHES THE SPOT...
THOR! BUT-- WHERE--?
IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A MAN WITH A CANE, HE JUST TOOK THE ELEVATOR DOWN!
THAT WAS TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT! MY ANXIETY MADE ME DANGEROUSLY CARELESS!
HEY! LOOK WHO IT IS!
WOW! SOMETHIN' MUST BE UP!
IF ONLY I HAD MY CAMERA!
BUT, AT THIS MOMENT, THE THUNDER GOD IS IN NO MOOD FOR THE ATTENTION OF CURIOUS ONLOOKERS...
BACK! STAND BACK-- ALL OF YOU!
I'VE GOT TO GO SOMEWHERE AND THINK! EVEN THOR CANNOT FIND ONE GIRL FROM AMONG THE TWO BILLION HUMANS WHO INHABIT THIS PLANET!
AT A TIME SUCH AS THIS, THE GOD OF THUNDER NEEDS THE ASSISTANCE OF OTHERS-- I MUST ENLIST THE AID OF MY FELLOW AVENGERS!
HEY, MOVE IT, MISTER! YOU'RE HOLDIN' UP TRAFFIC!
OOGA OOGA!! OOGA
DO YOU SEE WHAT I SEE, HARRIET?
YES! BUT--I ALWAYS THOUGHT HE WAS THE FIGMENT OF SOME SILLY IMAGINATION!
BACK UP, DEAR! PERHAPS WE CAN GET HIS AUTOGRAPH!
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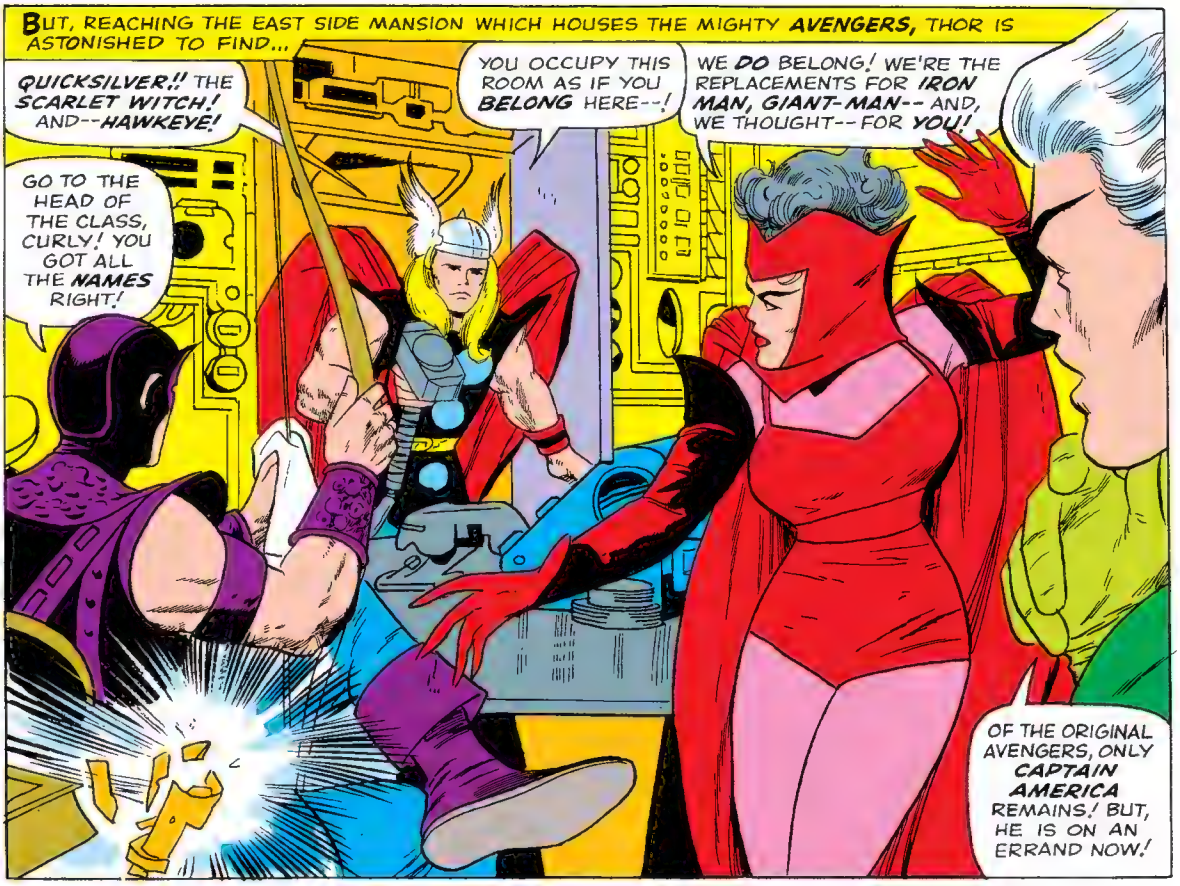
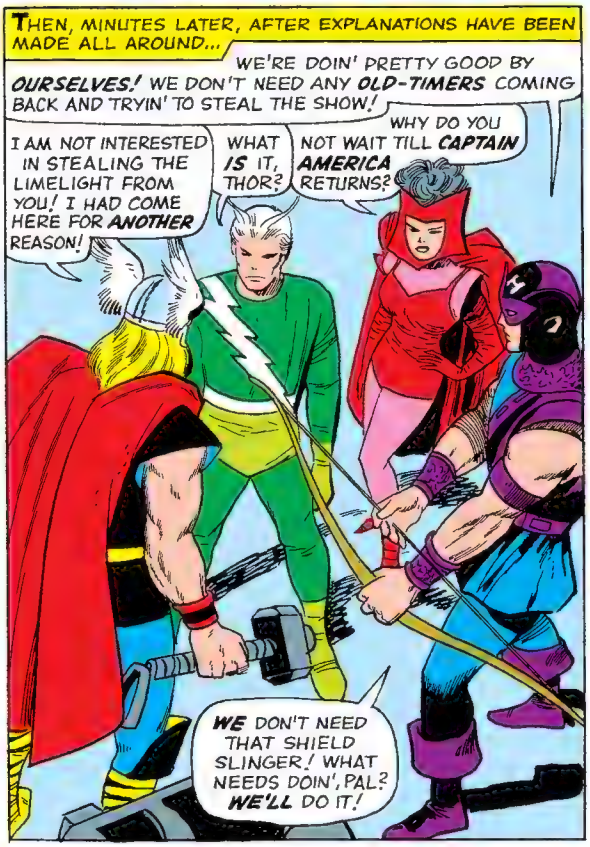
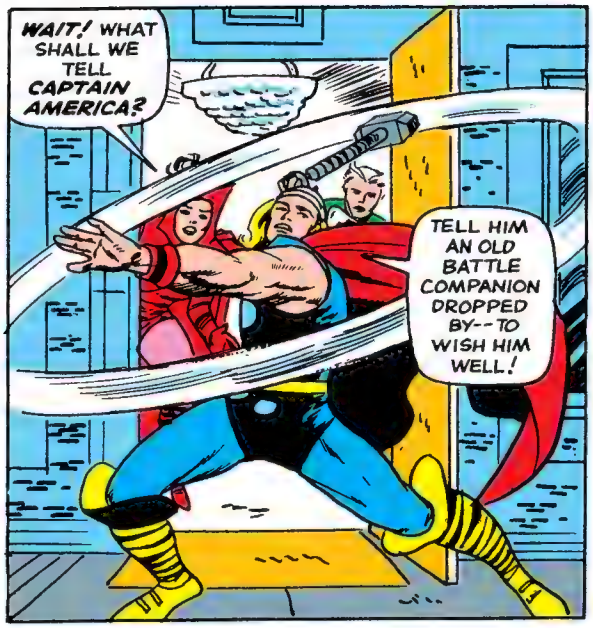
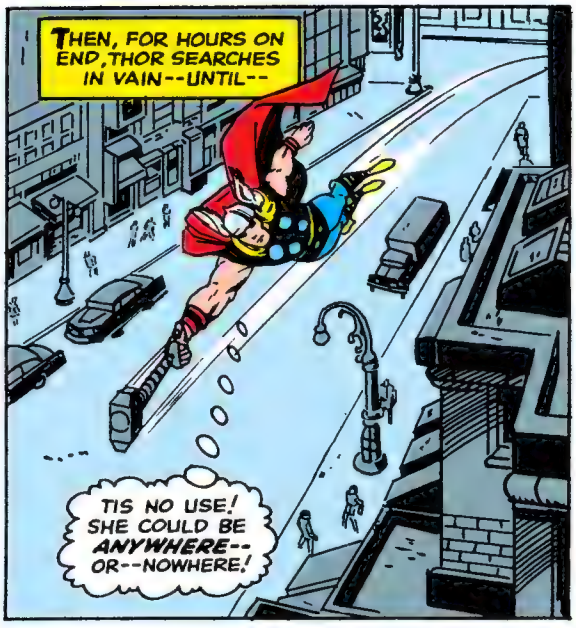
10

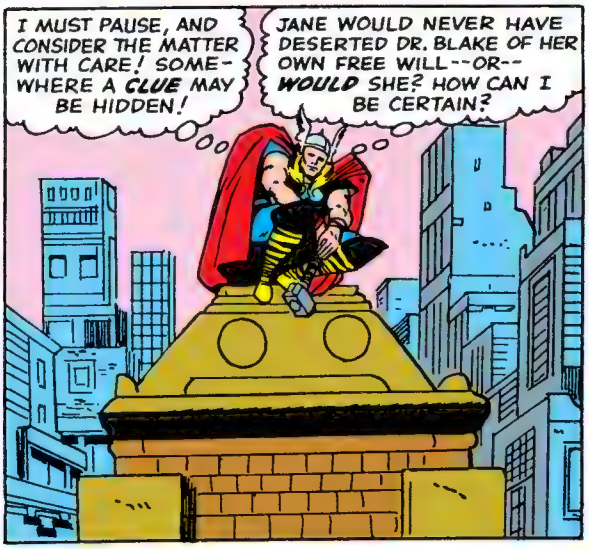

BUT, REACHING THE EAST SIDE MANSION WHICH HOUSES THE MIGHTY AVENGERS, THOR IS ASTONISHED TO FIND...
QUICKSILVER!! THE SCARLET WITCH! AND--HAWKEYE!
YOU OCCUPY THIS ROOM AS IF YOU BELONG HERE--!
WE DO BELONG! WE'RE THE REPLACEMENTS FOR IRON MAN, GIANT-MAN-- AND, WE THOUGHT--FOR YOU!
GO TO THE HEAD OF THE CLASS, CURLY! YOU GOT ALL THE NAMES RIGHT!
OF THE ORIGINAL AVENGERS, ONLY CAPTAIN AMERICA REMAINS! BUT, HE IS ON AN ERRAND NOW!

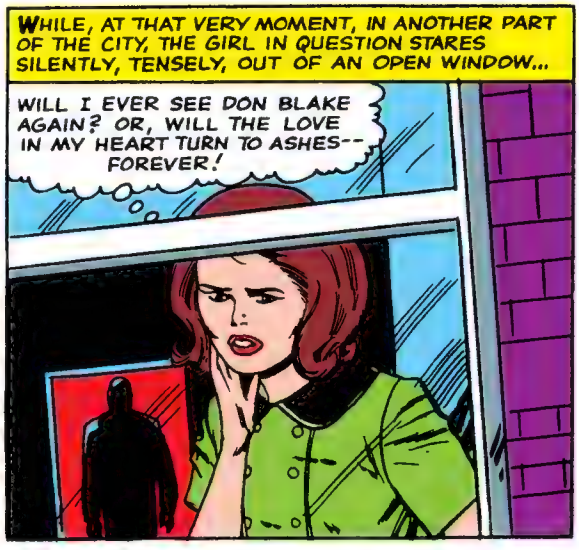

THEN, MINUTES LATER, AFTER EXPLANATIONS HAVE BEEN MADE ALL AROUND...
WE'RE DOIN' PRETTY GOOD BY OURSELVES! WE DON'T NEED ANY OLD-TIMERS COMING BACK AND TRYIN' TO STEAL THE SHOW!
I AM NOT INTERESTED IN STEALING THE LIMELIGHT FROM YOU! I HAD COME HERE FOR ANOTHER REASON!
WHAT IS IT, THOR?
WHY DO YOU NOT WAIT TILL CAPTAIN AMERICA RETURNS?
WE DON'T NEED THAT SHIELD SLINGER! WHAT NEEDS DOIN', PAL? WE'LL DO IT!

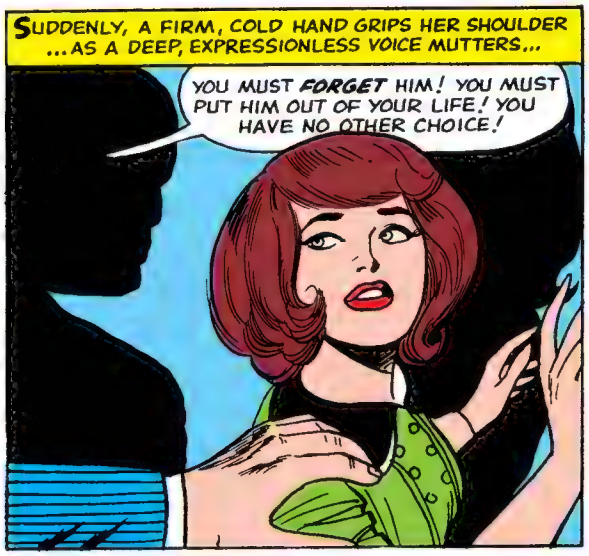
IT IS NOTHING! YOU CANNOT HELP ME! I SHALL BE ON MY WAY AGAIN!
THROUGH MANY BATTLES HAVE I FOUGHT SHOULDER-TO-SHOULDER WITH THE OLD AVENGERS! BUT--THESE NEW, BRASH, ARROGANT YOUNGSTERS --I CANNOT BRING MYSELF TO REQUEST THE AID OF SUCH AS THEY!

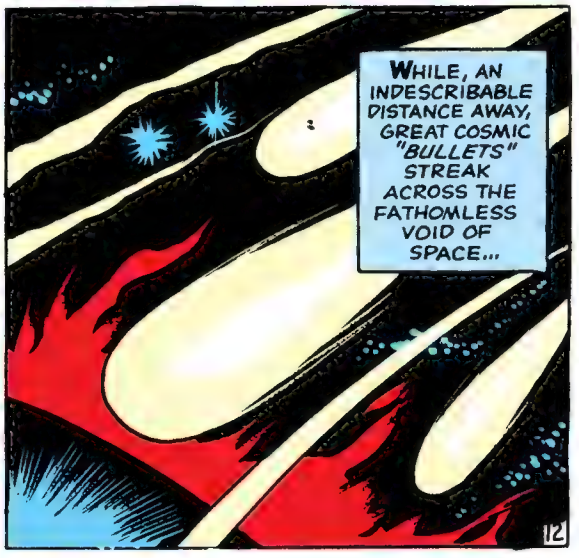

WAIT! WHAT SHALL WE TELL CAPTAIN AMERICA?
TELL HIM AN OLD BATTLE COMPANION DROPPED BY--TO WISH HIM WELL!


THEN, FOR HOURS ON END, THOR SEARCHES IN VAIN--UNTIL--
TIS NO USE! SHE COULD BE ANYWHERE-- OR--NOWHERE!


I MUST PAUSE, AND CONSIDER THE MATTER WITH CARE! SOMEWHERE A CLUE MAY BE HIDDEN!
JANE WOULD NEVER HAVE DESERTED DR. BLAKE OF HER OWN FREE WILL--OR--WOULD SHE? HOW CAN I BE CERTAIN?

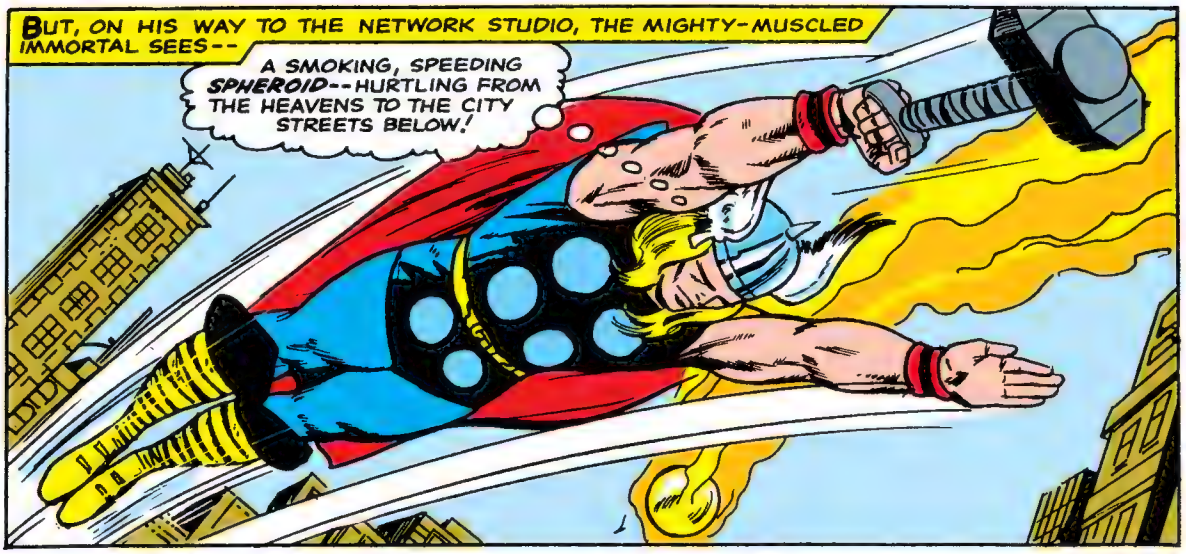

WHILE, AT THAT VERY MOMENT, IN ANOTHER PART OF THE CITY, THE GIRL IN QUESTION STARES SILENTLY, TENSELY, OUT OF AN OPEN WINDOW...
WILL I EVER SEE DON BLAKE AGAIN? OR, WILL THE LOVE IN MY HEART TURN TO ASHES--FOREVER!

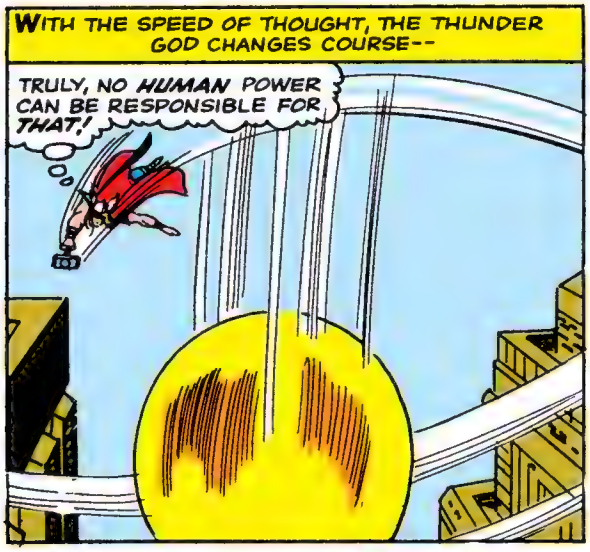

SUDDENLY, A FIRM, COLD HAND GRIPS HER SHOULDER ...AS A DEEP, EXPRESSIONLESS VOICE MUTTERS...
YOU MUST FORGET HIM! YOU MUST PUT HIM OUT OF YOUR LIFE! YOU HAVE NO OTHER CHOICE!

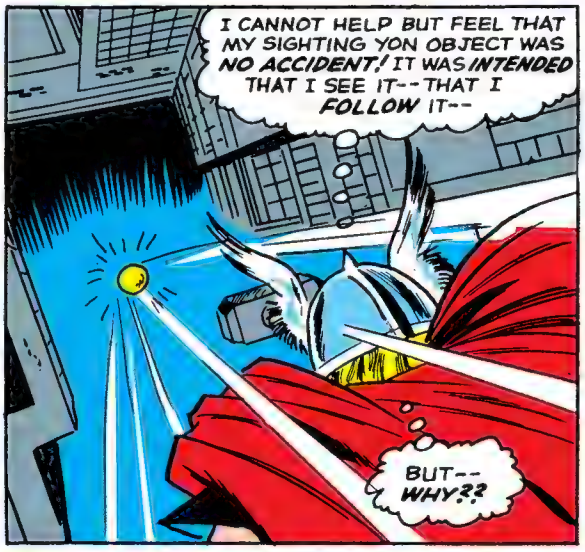

WHILE, AN INDESCRIBABLE DISTANCE AWAY, GREAT COSMIC "BULLETS" STREAK ACROSS THE FATHOMLESS VOID OF SPACE...

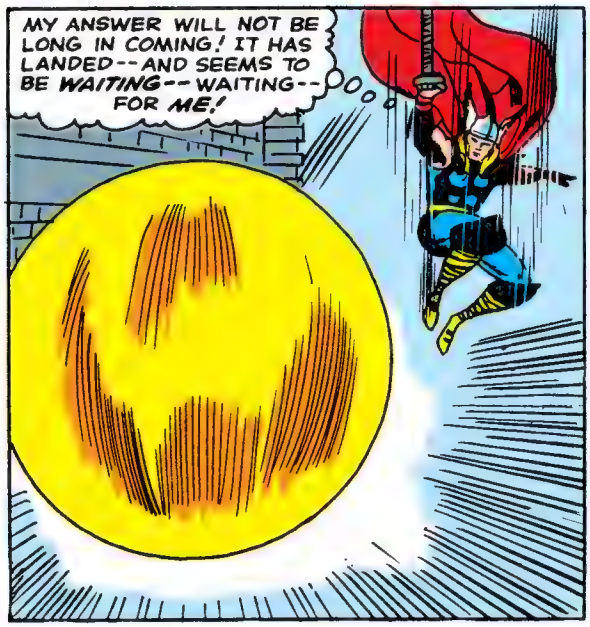
FOR, IN HALLOWED ASGARD, THE PRINCE OF VILLAINS--EVIL LOKI, SENDS HIS MACRO-MESON PARTICLES OF LIMITLESS ENERGY INTO THE INFINITE--PROBING SPACE FOR ONE CERTAIN OBJECT--SEARCHING--SCANNING--SCHEMING--!
BEFORE I BEGIN MY MOST SINISTER--MY MOST AMBITIOUS PROJECT--THE DETHRONING OF ODIN HIMSELF, I MUST FIRST BE SURE THAT THOR WILL BE UNABLE TO COME TO THE AID OF THE BEARDED ONE!
THUS, I MUST FIND THE ONE CREATURE IN ALL THE UNIVERSE WHO CAN DESTROY THE THUNDER GOD--!
AH! I HAVE LOCATED HIM AT LAST!
HE ALMOST SUCCEEDED IN SLAYING MY ACCURSED HALF-BROTHER THE LAST TIME THEY FOUGHT--BUT WAS OUT-SMARTED BY THOR AT THE MOMENT OF DECISION!
BUT, THIS TIME HE WILL BE ON GUARD--HE WILL NOT BE TRICKED AGAIN!
ONLY MY EYES--THE CUNNING EYES OF THE PRINCE OF EVIL--COULD HAVE DETECTED THAT DRIFTING CLOUD OF HELIUM VAPOR--THE CLOUD WHICH WAS ONCE A MAN!
UNERRINGLY, THE MACRO-MESON "BULLET" SHATTERS THE HELIUM CLOUD, BOMBARDING IT WITH COUNTLESS PARTICLES OF LIVING ENERGY!
SLOWLY, NEW ELEMENTS BEGIN TO EMERGE--AND, AMIDST THE AWESOME RESHAPING OF DORMANT MATTER, THE CLOUD STARTS TO ASSUME A HUMAN FORM...
13

EVERYTHING PROCEEDS PERFECTLY! NOW, ALL I NEED DO IS FIRE A TRANSLUCENT SPHEROID TO ENCLOSE HIM, AND TO PROTECT HIM ON HIS JOURNEY TO EARTH!
IT IS DONE! I HAVE SET IN MOTION FORCES WHICH NO ONE CAN HALT! THE STAGE IS SET--THE PLAYERS ARE READY--THE TRAGEDY IS ABOUT TO BEGIN!!
WHILE, BACK ON EARTH, THOR NOTICES A FOREIGN FILM STAR BEING INTERVIEWED FOR TV COVERAGE...
WOULD YOU CARE TO TELL US ABOUT YOUR NEWEST FILM, MADEMOISELLE?
MAIS OUI, MON CHER! I THOUGHT YOU WOULD NEVAIRE ASK!
TELEVISION CAMERAS! THAT'S THE ANSWER I NEED!
WHEREVER JANE IS, SHE MUST BE WITHIN SIGHT OR SOUND OF A T.V. SET! I'LL USE TELEVISION TO LOCATE HER!
I'LL BROADCAST A MESSAGE TO HER--UNTIL I RECEIVE A RESPONSE!
THE NETWORKS ARE CERTAIN TO COOPERATE! THEY HAVE OFFERED ME A FORTUNE TO FACE THE CAMERAS IN THE PAST!
IT IS THE ONLY WAY!
14

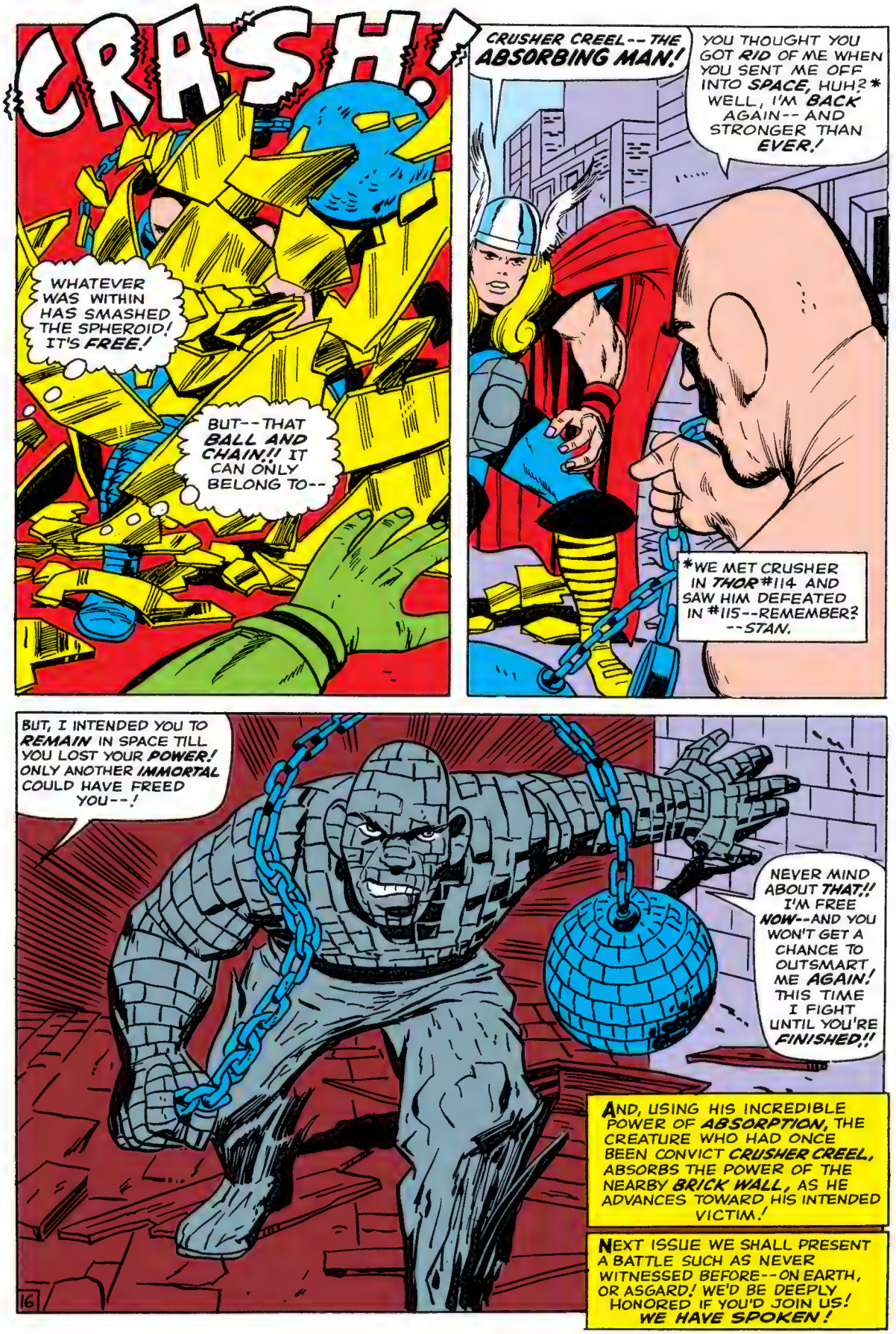

BUT, ON HIS WAY TO THE NETWORK STUDIO, THE MIGHTY-MUSCLED IMMORTAL SEES--
A SMOKING, SPEEDING SPHEROID--HURTLING FROM THE HEAVENS TO THE CITY STREETS BELOW!


WITH THE SPEED OF THOUGHT, THE THUNDER GOD CHANGES COURSE--
TRULY, NO HUMAN POWER CAN BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THAT!


I CANNOT HELP BUT FEEL THAT MY SIGHTING YON OBJECT WAS NO ACCIDENT! IT WAS INTENDED THAT I SEE IT--THAT I FOLLOW IT--
BUT-- WHY??

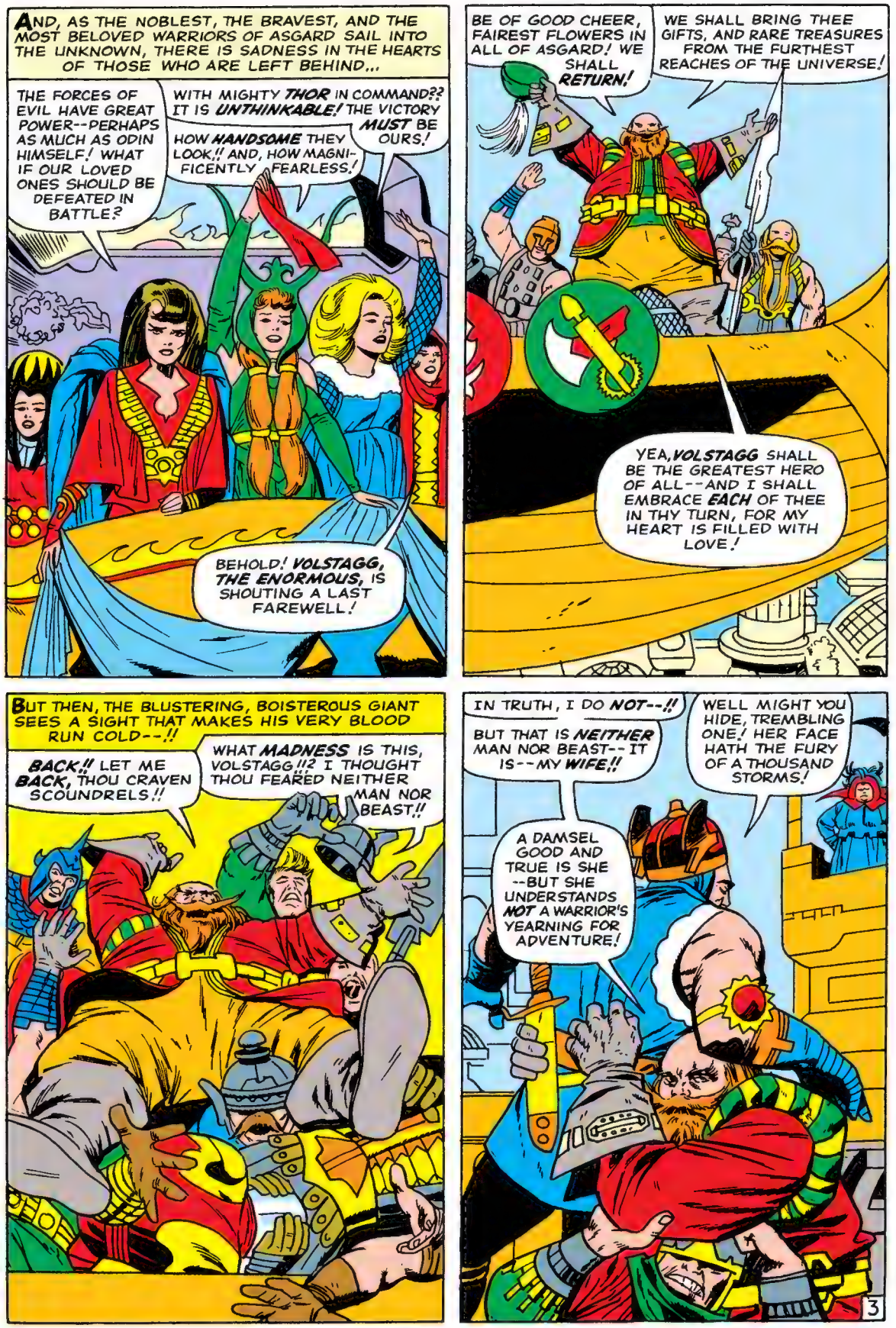

MY ANSWER WILL NOT BE LONG IN COMING! IT HAS LANDED--AND SEEMS TO BE WAITING--WAITING--FOR ME!

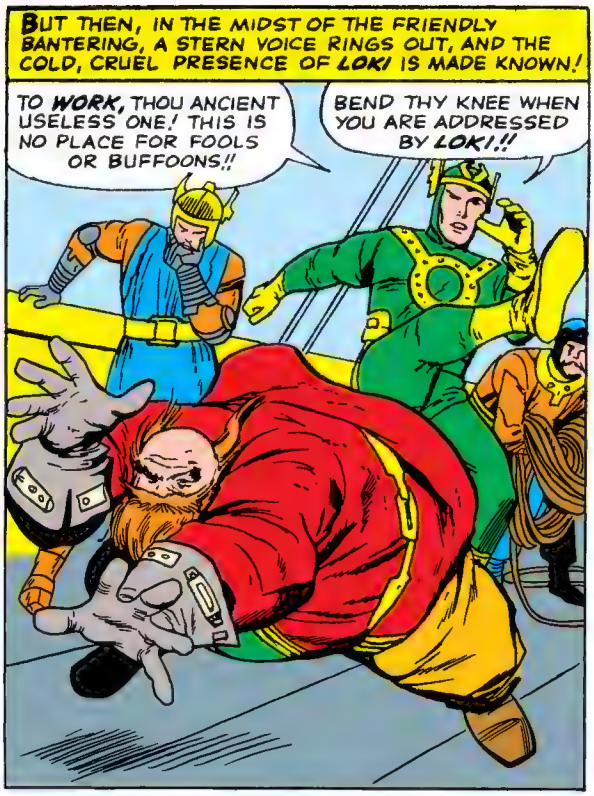
THEN, AS THE SON OF ODIN SLOWLY APPROACHES THE MYSTERIOUS OBJECT--
IT MOVES!! IT CHANGES SHAPE--!
IT IS AS THOUGH SOMETHING INSIDE IS STRUGGLING--TO BREAK OUT!


CRASH!
WHATEVER WAS WITHIN HAS SMASHED THE SPHEROID! IT'S FREE!
BUT--THAT BALL AND CHAIN!! IT CAN ONLY BELONG TO--
CRUSHER CREEL--THE ABSORBING MAN!
YOU THOUGHT YOU GOT RID OF ME WHEN YOU SENT ME OFF INTO SPACE, HUH?* WELL, I'M BACK AGAIN--AND STRONGER THAN EVER!
*WE MET CRUSHER IN THOR #114 AND SAW HIM DEFEATED IN #115--REMEMBER? --STAN.
BUT, I INTENDED YOU TO REMAIN IN SPACE TILL YOU LOST YOUR POWER! ONLY ANOTHER IMMORTAL COULD HAVE FREED YOU--!
NEVER MIND ABOUT THAT!! I'M FREE NOW--AND YOU WON'T GET A CHANCE TO OUTSMART ME AGAIN! THIS TIME I FIGHT UNTIL YOU'RE FINISHED!!
AND, USING HIS INCREDIBLE POWER OF ABSORPTION, THE CREATURE WHO HAD ONCE BEEN CONVICT CRUSHER CREEL, ABSORBS THE POWER OF THE NEARBY BRICK WALL, AS HE ADVANCES TOWARD HIS INTENDED VICTIM!
NEXT ISSUE WE SHALL PRESENT A BATTLE SUCH AS NEVER WITNESSED BEFORE--ON EARTH, OR ASGARD! WE'D BE DEEPLY HONORED IF YOU'D JOIN US! WE HAVE SPOKEN!
16

TALES OF ASGARD, HOME OF THE MIGHTY NORSE GODS
"SET SAIL!"
THE CREW HAS BEEN GATHERED... AND, UNDER THE WATCHFUL EYE OF LORDLY ODIN, THE STRANGEST VOYAGE OF ALL TIME IS ABOUT TO BEGIN!
TRULY A MARVEL MASTERWORK!
TOLD BY: STAN LEE
DRAWN BY: JACK KIRBY
INKED BY: VINCE COLLETTA
LETTERED BY: ARTIE SIMEK
THE EYES OF ODIN SHALL BE EVER ON THEE!

IN THE HALLOWED NAME OF ASGARD-- BY THE GLORY OF THE ETERNAL BRIDGE--I GRANT THEE FAIR WINDS AND CLOUDLESS SKIES--SO LONG AS YE VOYAGE THRU MY DOMAIN!
THE TIME HAS COME!! LET THE SAILS BE UNFURRRRRLED--!!!
THUS, THE GREAT SHIP-- SUCH AS NO MORTAL EYES HAVE EVER BEHELD--TAKES TO THE AIR-- GUIDED BY THE ENDLESS CURRENTS OF SPACE--!!
SAIL ON! WE SHALL NE'ER RETURN TILL WE HAVE FOUND, AND BESTED THE FORCES OF EVIL! SAIL ON-- IN THE NAME OF ODIN, THE ALL-WISE!!

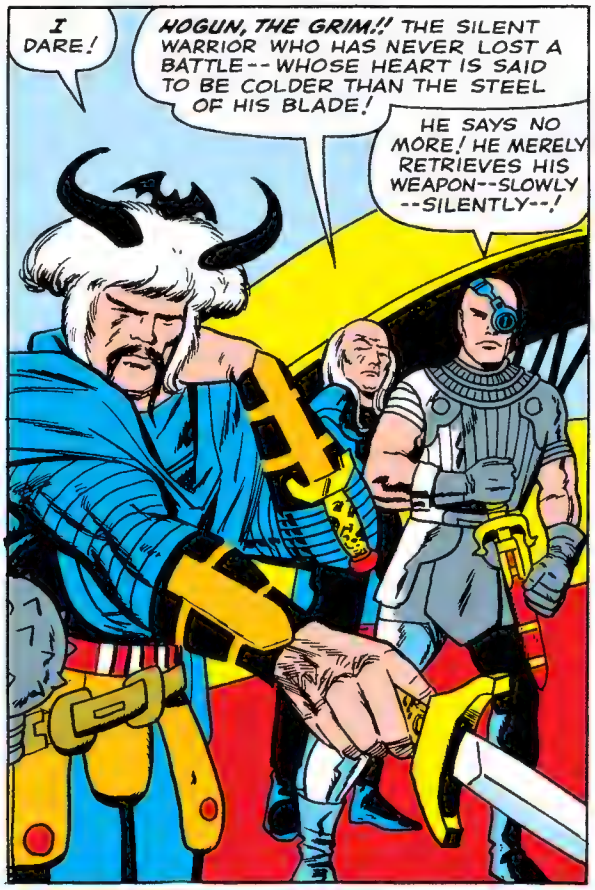

AND, AS THE NOBLEST, THE BRAVEST, AND THE MOST BELOVED WARRIORS OF ASGARD SAIL INTO THE UNKNOWN, THERE IS SADNESS IN THE HEARTS OF THOSE WHO ARE LEFT BEHIND...
THE FORCES OF EVIL HAVE GREAT POWER--PERHAPS AS MUCH AS ODIN HIMSELF! WHAT IF OUR LOVED ONES SHOULD BE DEFEATED IN BATTLE?
WITH MIGHTY THOR IN COMMAND?? IT IS UNTHINKABLE! THE VICTORY MUST BE OURS!
HOW HANDSOME THEY LOOK!! AND, HOW MAGNIFICENTLY FEARLESS!
BEHOLD! VOLSTAGG, THE ENORMOUS, IS SHOUTING A LAST FAREWELL!
BE OF GOOD CHEER, FAIREST FLOWERS IN ALL OF ASGARD! WE SHALL RETURN!
WE SHALL BRING THEE GIFTS, AND RARE TREASURES FROM THE FURTHEST REACHES OF THE UNIVERSE!
YEA, VOLSTAGG SHALL BE THE GREATEST HERO OF ALL--AND I SHALL EMBRACE EACH OF THEE IN THY TURN, FOR MY HEART IS FILLED WITH LOVE!
BUT THEN, THE BLUSTERING, BOISTEROUS GIANT SEES A SIGHT THAT MAKES HIS VERY BLOOD RUN COLD--!!
BACK!! LET ME BACK, THOU CRAVEN SCOUNDRELS!!
WHAT MADNESS IS THIS, VOLSTAGG!!? I THOUGHT THOU FEARED NEITHER MAN NOR BEAST!!
IN TRUTH, I DO NOT--!!
BUT THAT IS NEITHER MAN NOR BEAST-- IT IS--MY WIFE!!
WELL MIGHT YOU HIDE, TREMBLING ONE! HER FACE HATH THE FURY OF A THOUSAND STORMS!
A DAMSEL GOOD AND TRUE IS SHE --BUT SHE UNDERSTANDS NOT A WARRIOR'S YEARNING FOR ADVENTURE!
3


BUT THEN, IN THE MIDST OF THE FRIENDLY BANTERING, A STERN VOICE RINGS OUT, AND THE COLD, CRUEL PRESENCE OF LOKI IS MADE KNOWN!
TO WORK, THOU ANCIENT USELESS ONE! THIS IS NO PLACE FOR FOOLS OR BUFFOONS!!
BEND THY KNEE WHEN YOU ARE ADDRESSED BY LOKI!!

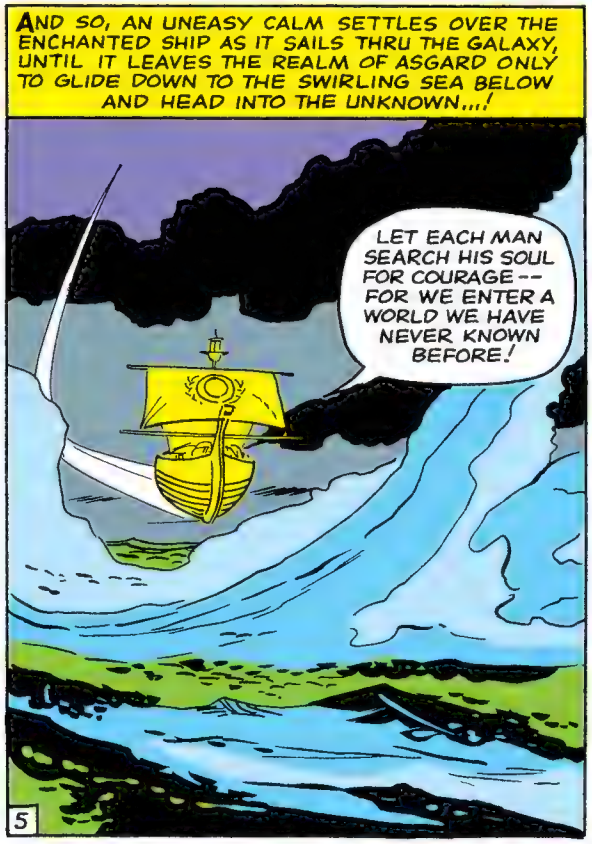
ENOUGH, HALF-BROTHER!! NO CREWMAN OF MINE WILL BE TREATED THUS WHILE THOR IS IN COMMAND!! THEY ARE OUR FELLOW WARRIORS --NOT SERFS UPON WHOM YOU MAY VENT YOUR WRATH!
YOU DARE TO SIDE WITH HIM AGAINST ME BEFORE THE ENTIRE CREW??! YOU SHALL LIVE TO REGRET THIS INDIGNITY, THUNDER GOD!

AND, EVEN AS THE TWO IMMORTALS SPEAK, MAGRAT, THE SCHEMER WHISPERS A SINISTER SUGGESTION TO KRODA, THE DUELLIST--!
NOW IS YOUR CHANCE, KRODA! LOKI WILL PAY HANDSOMELY FOR SUCH A DEED!
OUR JOURNEY WILL BE LONG, AND FRAUGHT WITH DANGER! WE MUST FIGHT TOGETHER IF WE WOULD ENDURE!
LOKI DOES AS LOKI WISHES! I MAKE NO PROMISES!

BUT, NO SOONER DOES MERCILESS KRODA DRAW HIS BLADE FROM ITS SCABBARD, THEN ANOTHER STEEL SHAFT BURIES ITSELF IN THE MAST BEFORE HIM!!
STAY THY HAND, BASE ASSASSIN!!
WHO DARES--???


I DARE!
HOGUN, THE GRIM!! THE SILENT WARRIOR WHO HAS NEVER LOST A BATTLE--WHOSE HEART IS SAID TO BE COLDER THAN THE STEEL OF HIS BLADE!
HE SAYS NO MORE! HE MERELY RETRIEVES HIS WEAPON--SLOWLY --SILENTLY--!

THE MOMENT HAS BEEN LOST! I SHALL FIND ANOTHER TIME TO STRIKE--AND TO REPAY HOGUN FOR THIS INSOLENCE, AS WELL!
HAVE A CARE, KRODA!! THERE IS MORE TO THAT ONE THAN MEETS THE EYE! NEVER HAVE I BEHELD A FACE SO MERCILESS!


AND SO, AN UNEASY CALM SETTLES OVER THE ENCHANTED SHIP AS IT SAILS THRU THE GALAXY, UNTIL IT LEAVES THE REALM OF ASGARD ONLY TO GLIDE DOWN TO THE SWIRLING SEA BELOW AND HEAD INTO THE UNKNOWN...!
LET EACH MAN SEARCH HIS SOUL FOR COURAGE-- FOR WE ENTER A WORLD WE HAVE NEVER KNOWN BEFORE!

WHILE, BACK IN THE FABLED CITY, EVEN A KING CAN FEEL THE FEARFUL PANGS OF DARK UNCERTAINTY...
HOW THINK YOU, MASTER OF PROPHECY? WAS MY DECISION A WISE ONE?
MORE THAN THAT, SIRE! IT WAS THE ONLY ONE THOU COULDST MAKE!
WHAT DECISION DOES NOBLE ODIN REFER TO? WHAT SHADOWY SECRETS ARE HIDDEN BENEATH THE SURFACE OF ODIN'S GREAT VOYAGE? WE SWEAR BY ASGARD'S GOLDEN SPIRES THAT THE QUEST WILL CONTINUE NEXT ISSUE-- AND WE'LL FACE IT TOGETHER! SO BE IT!

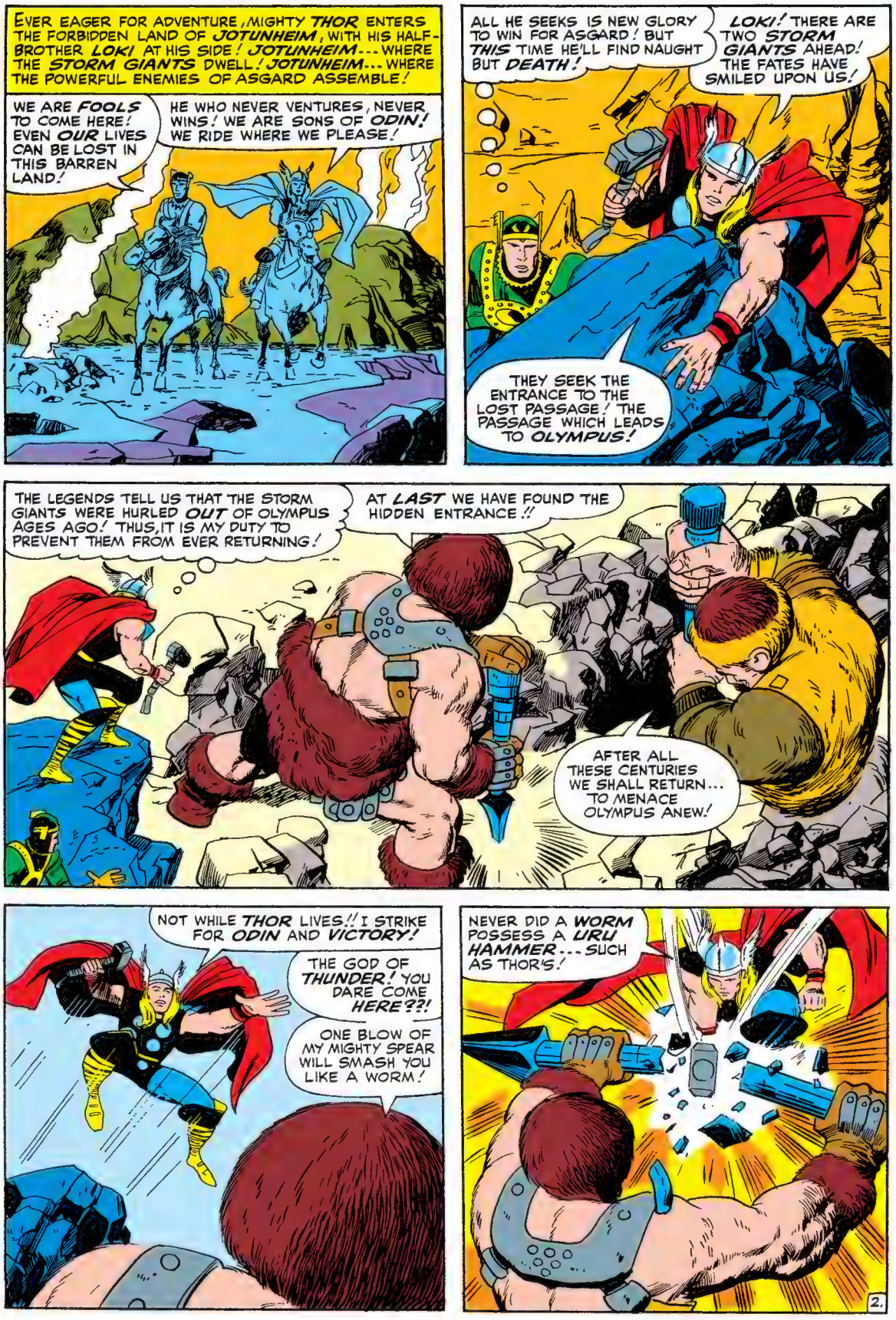
THOR ANNUAL
72 BIG PAGES
MARVEL COMICS GROUP 25¢
SPECIAL KING SIZE ANNUAL!
JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY WITH
THE MIGHTY
THOR
#1
1965
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
SEE THE CLASH OF TITANS!
ALL-NEW "THOR VS. HERCULES"
PLUS... THE MOST REQUESTED FIRST APPEARANCES OF THOR'S MOST DEADLY FOES....!
LOKI, THE EMBODIMENT OF EVIL!
THE MYSTERIOUS RADIO-ACTIVE MAN!
THE DEMON DUPLICATORS!
THE LAVA-MAN!

MONTH AFTER MONTH, WE HAVE RECEIVED AN AVALANCHE OF MAIL DEMANDING THAT WE PIT THE MIGHTIEST IMMORTALS OF ALL TIME IN HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT! THOUGH NEITHER HISTORY NOR LEGEND RECORD SUCH A BATTLE, IF EVER THE SON OF ODIN *HAD* FOUGHT THE SON OF ZEUS, THE MATCHLESS IMAGINATIONS OF LEE AND KIRBY VISUALIZE A BATTLE TO STAGGER THE SENSES AND DAZZLE THE EYES! A BATTLE WHICH *MIGHT* HAVE BEEN FOUGHT, THEN SWEPT AWAY IN THE WHIRLPOOL OF TIME! A BATTLE SUCH AS *THIS* ... !!

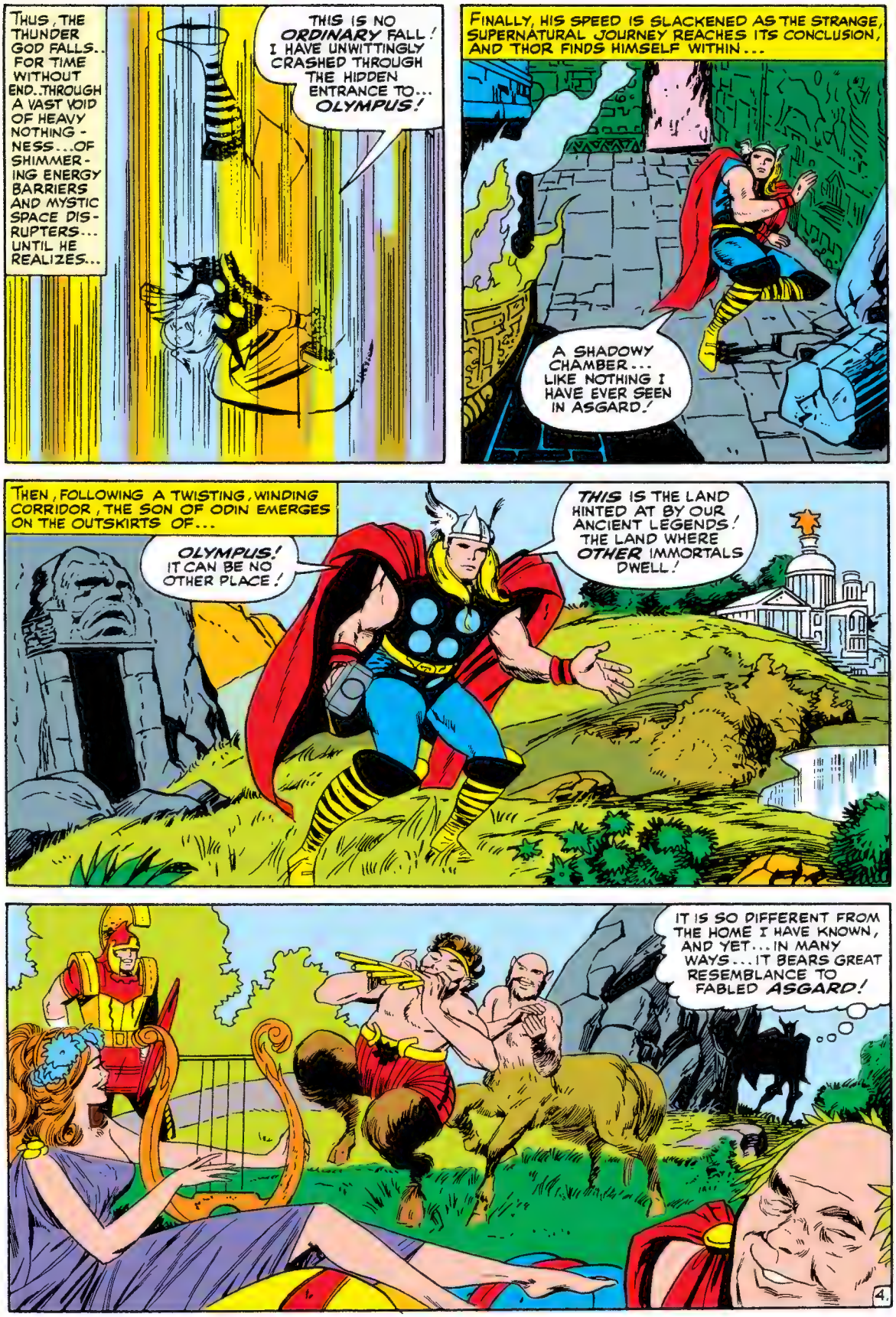
"WHEN TITANS CLASH!"

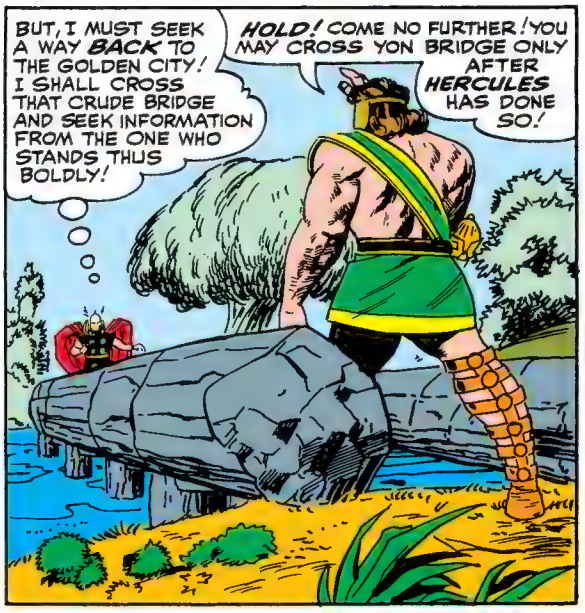
THOR vs. HERCULES!

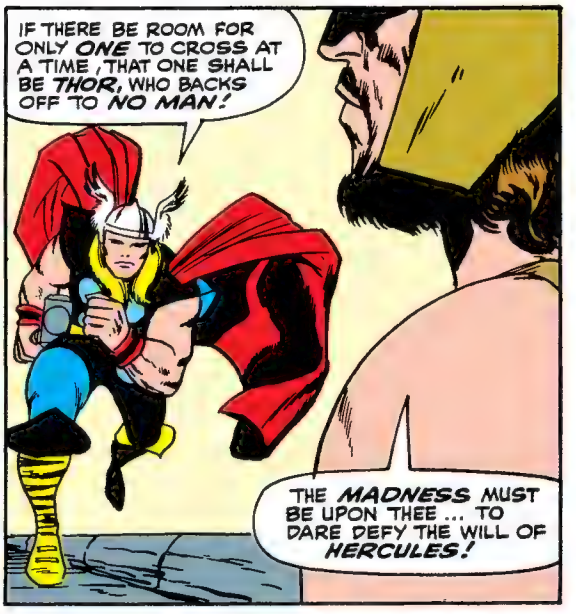
Mighty story by: STAN LEE
Majestic art by: JACK KIRBY
Masterful inking by: VINCE COLLETTA
Mostly lettered by: SAM ROSEN

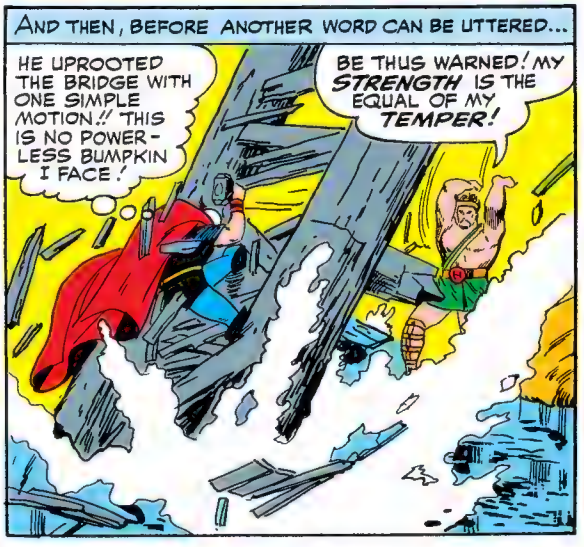

EVER EAGER FOR ADVENTURE, MIGHTY THOR ENTERS THE FORBIDDEN LAND OF JOTUNHEIM, WITH HIS HALF-BROTHER LOKI AT HIS SIDE! JOTUNHEIM--- WHERE THE STORM GIANTS DWELL! JOTUNHEIM... WHERE THE POWERFUL ENEMIES OF ASGARD ASSEMBLE!
WE ARE FOOLS TO COME HERE! EVEN OUR LIVES CAN BE LOST IN THIS BARREN LAND!
HE WHO NEVER VENTURES, NEVER WINS! WE ARE SONS OF ODIN! WE RIDE WHERE WE PLEASE!
ALL HE SEEKS IS NEW GLORY TO WIN FOR ASGARD! BUT THIS TIME HE'LL FIND NAUGHT BUT DEATH!
LOKI! THERE ARE TWO STORM GIANTS AHEAD! THE FATES HAVE SMILED UPON US!
THEY SEEK THE ENTRANCE TO THE LOST PASSAGE! THE PASSAGE WHICH LEADS TO OLYMPUS!
THE LEGENDS TELL US THAT THE STORM GIANTS WERE HURLED OUT OF OLYMPUS AGES AGO! THUS, IT IS MY DUTY TO PREVENT THEM FROM EVER RETURNING!
AT LAST WE HAVE FOUND THE HIDDEN ENTRANCE!!
AFTER ALL THESE CENTURIES WE SHALL RETURN... TO MENACE OLYMPUS ANEW!
NOT WHILE THOR LIVES!! I STRIKE FOR ODIN AND VICTORY!
THE GOD OF THUNDER! YOU DARE COME HERE??!
ONE BLOW OF MY MIGHTY SPEAR WILL SMASH YOU LIKE A WORM!
NEVER DID A WORM POSSESS A URU HAMMER--- SUCH AS THOR'S!
2.

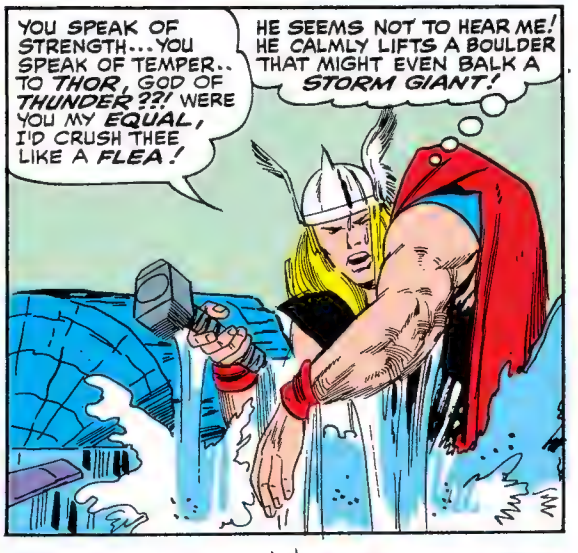
LOKI!! TO MY SIDE!
NO ANSWER! THE FAITH-LESS ONE HAS FLED!!
SO BE IT! THEN THOR SHALL BATTLE ALONE!
BEGONE! EVIL ONES! YOU ARE NO MATCH FOR THE SON OF ODIN!
IF OLYMPUS TRULY EXISTS, THE LIKES OF YOU SHALL NEVER THREATEN IT!
BACK, I SAY!! GET YOU BACK!!
NONE CAN FACE THE FLASHING FURY OF THOR!
BUT, EVEN AS THE GALLANT THUNDER GOD'S POUNDING ATTACK DRIVES HIS TWO GIGANTIC FOES INTO FULL RETREAT, THE UNIMAGINABLE FORCE OF THOR'S HAMMER BLOWS CAUSES THE VERY GROUND BENEATH HIS FEET TO CRUMBLE IN A SUDDEN ROCK SLIDE...!
I HAVE CAUSED AN AVALANCHE! THE GROUND IS SHATTERED BELOW ME!
3.

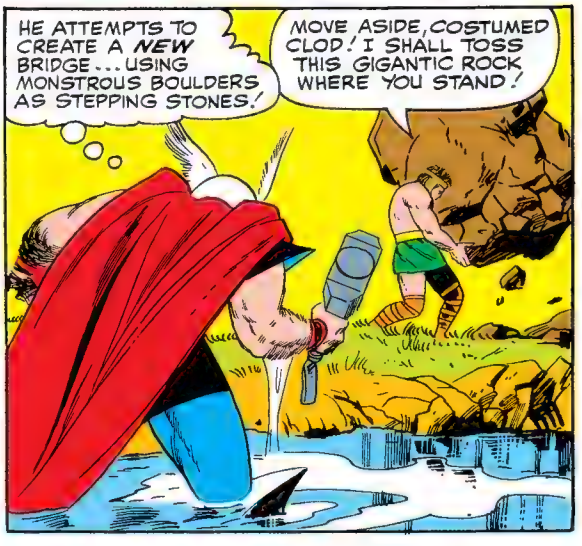

THUS, THE THUNDER GOD FALLS.. FOR TIME WITHOUT END..THROUGH A VAST VOID OF HEAVY NOTHING-NESS...OF SHIMMERING ENERGY BARRIERS AND MYSTIC SPACE DISRUPTERS... UNTIL HE REALIZES...
THIS IS NO ORDINARY FALL! I HAVE UNWITTINGLY CRASHED THROUGH THE HIDDEN ENTRANCE TO... OLYMPUS!
FINALLY, HIS SPEED IS SLACKENED AS THE STRANGE, SUPERNATURAL JOURNEY REACHES ITS CONCLUSION, AND THOR FINDS HIMSELF WITHIN...
A SHADOWY CHAMBER... LIKE NOTHING I HAVE EVER SEEN IN ASGARD!
THEN, FOLLOWING A TWISTING, WINDING CORRIDOR, THE SON OF ODIN EMERGES ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF...
OLYMPUS! IT CAN BE NO OTHER PLACE!
THIS IS THE LAND HINTED AT BY OUR ANCIENT LEGENDS! THE LAND WHERE OTHER IMMORTALS DWELL!
IT IS SO DIFFERENT FROM THE HOME I HAVE KNOWN, AND YET... IN MANY WAYS... IT BEARS GREAT RESEMBLANCE TO FABLED ASGARD!
4.

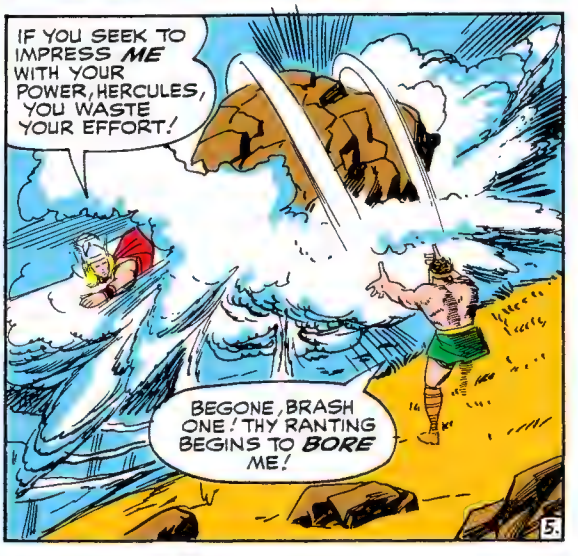

BUT, I MUST SEEK A WAY BACK TO THE GOLDEN CITY! I SHALL CROSS THAT CRUDE BRIDGE AND SEEK INFORMATION FROM THE ONE WHO STANDS THUS BOLDLY!
HOLD! COME NO FURTHER! YOU MAY CROSS YON BRIDGE ONLY AFTER HERCULES HAS DONE SO!

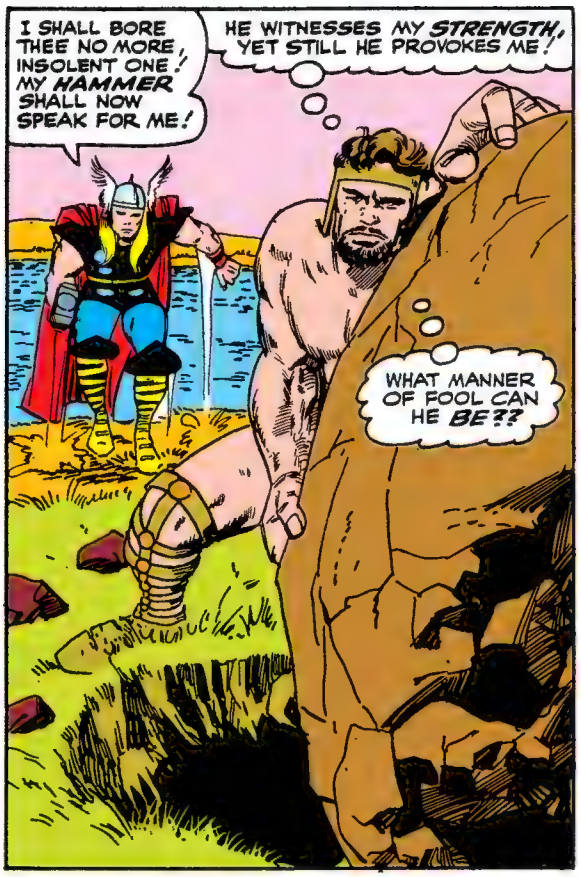

IF THERE BE ROOM FOR ONLY ONE TO CROSS AT A TIME, THAT ONE SHALL BE THOR, WHO BACKS OFF TO NO MAN!
THE MADNESS MUST BE UPON THEE ... TO DARE DEFY THE WILL OF HERCULES!


AND THEN, BEFORE ANOTHER WORD CAN BE UTTERED...
HE UPROOTED THE BRIDGE WITH ONE SIMPLE MOTION!! THIS IS NO POWER-LESS BUMPKIN I FACE!
BE THUS WARNED! MY STRENGTH IS THE EQUAL OF MY TEMPER!

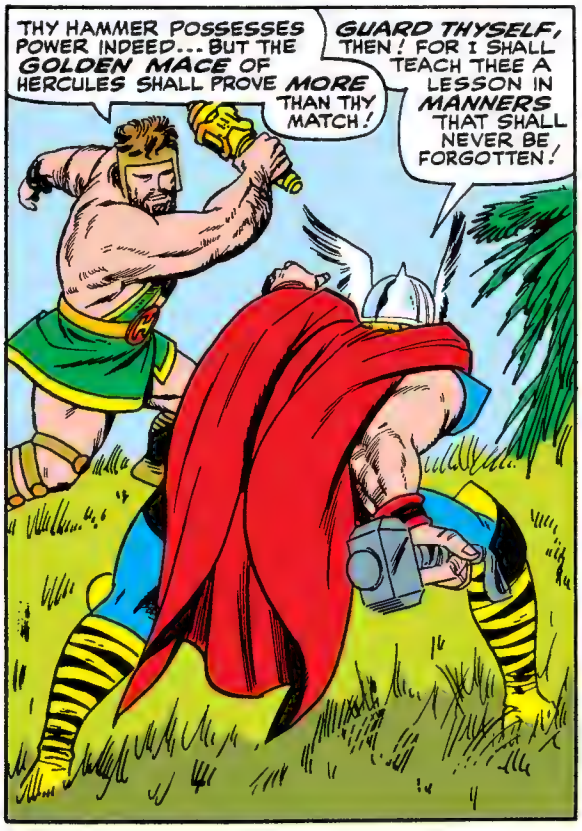

YOU SPEAK OF STRENGTH... YOU SPEAK OF TEMPER.. TO THOR, GOD OF THUNDER??! WERE YOU MY EQUAL, I'D CRUSH THEE LIKE A FLEA!
HE SEEMS NOT TO HEAR ME! HE CALMLY LIFTS A BOULDER THAT MIGHT EVEN BALK A STORM GIANT!

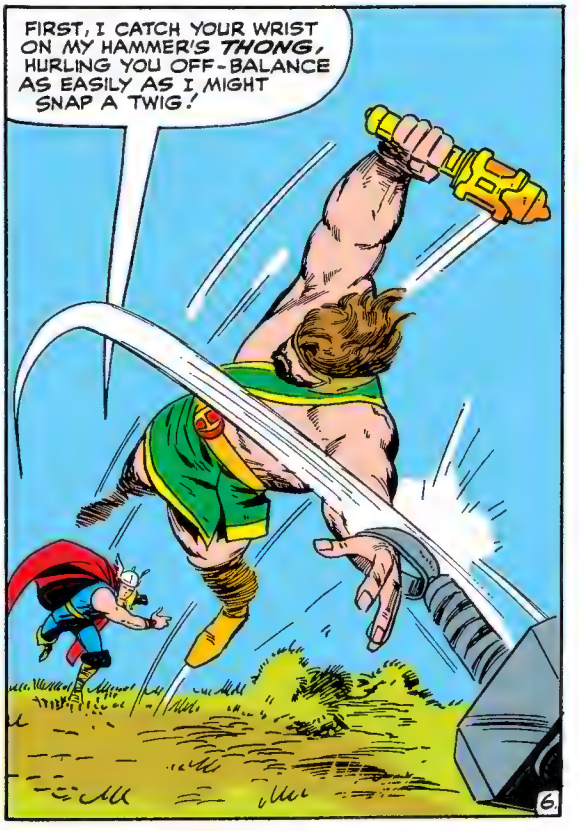

HE ATTEMPTS TO CREATE A NEW BRIDGE... USING MONSTROUS BOULDERS AS STEPPING STONES!
MOVE ASIDE, COSTUMED CLOD! I SHALL TOSS THIS GIGANTIC ROCK WHERE YOU STAND!

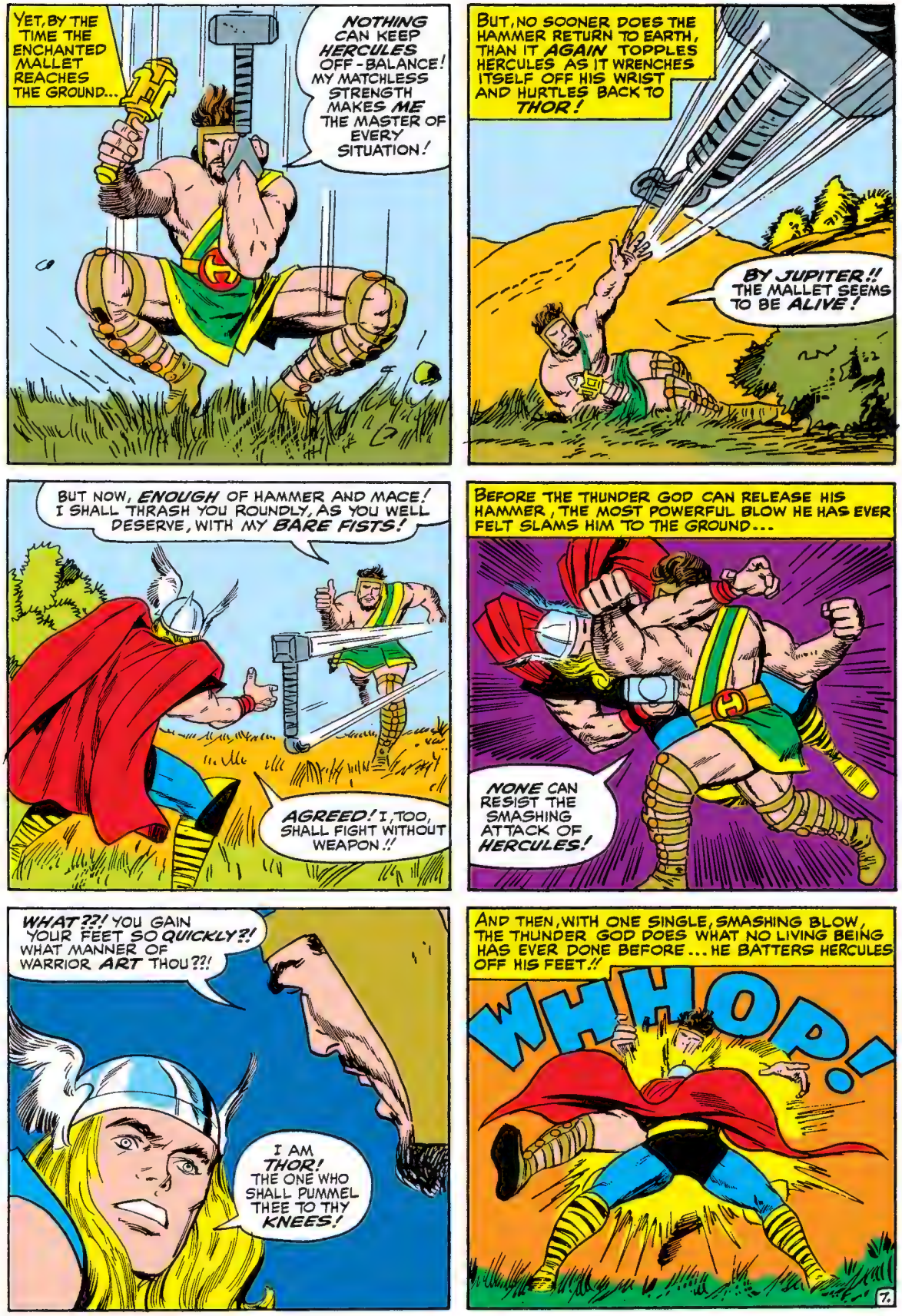

IF YOU SEEK TO IMPRESS ME WITH YOUR POWER, HERCULES, YOU WASTE YOUR EFFORT!
BEGONE, BRASH ONE! THY RANTING BEGINS TO BORE ME!


I SHALL BORE THEE NO MORE, INSOLENT ONE! MY HAMMER SHALL NOW SPEAK FOR ME!
HE WITNESSES MY STRENGTH, YET STILL HE PROVOKES ME!
WHAT MANNER OF FOOL CAN HE BE??

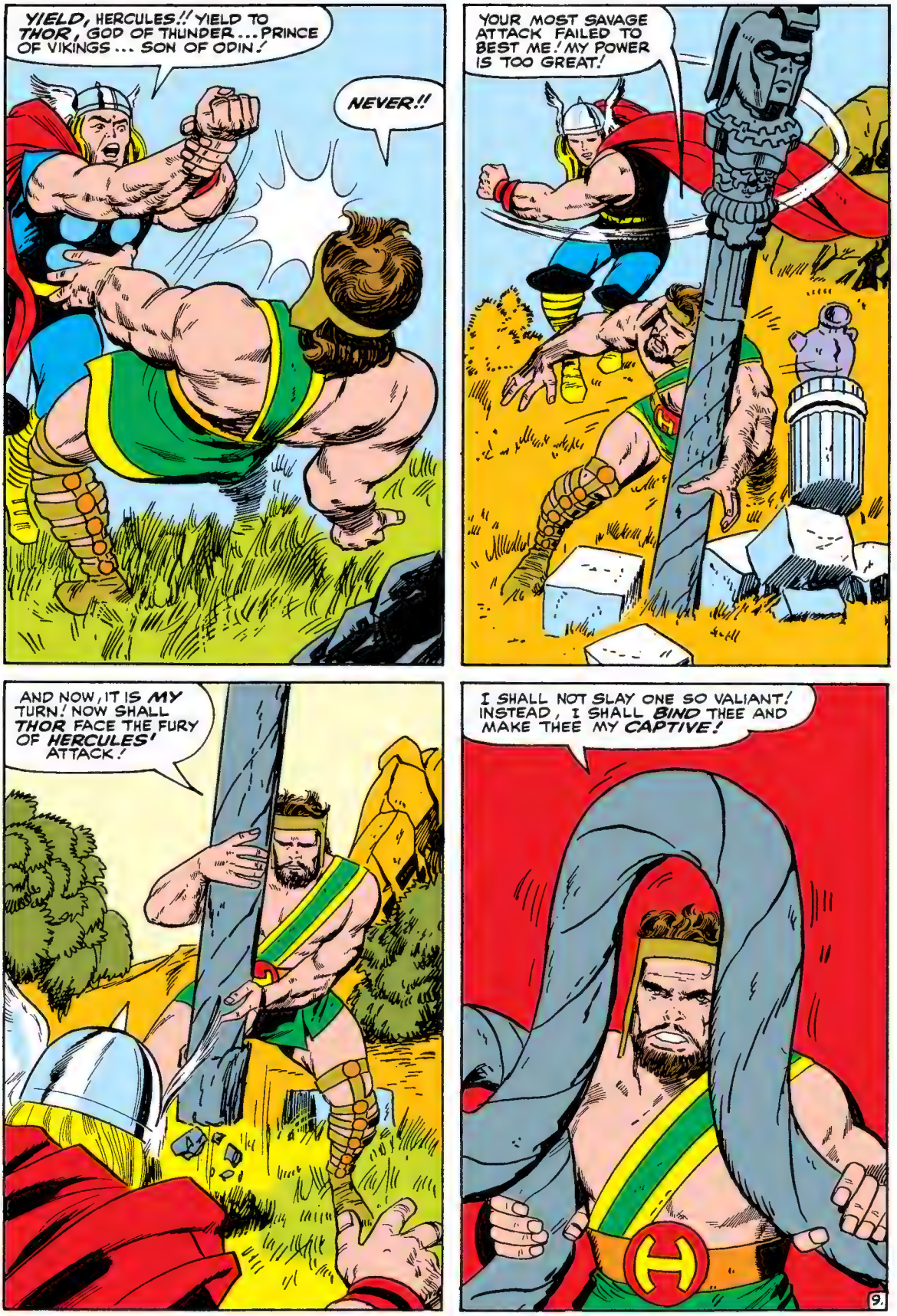
AS EASILY AS YOU CAN LIFT THAT BOULDER, MIGHTY THOR CAN SHATTER IT TO BITS!
BY ZEUS, ARROGANT ONE! THOU HAST TRULY GONE TOO FAR!

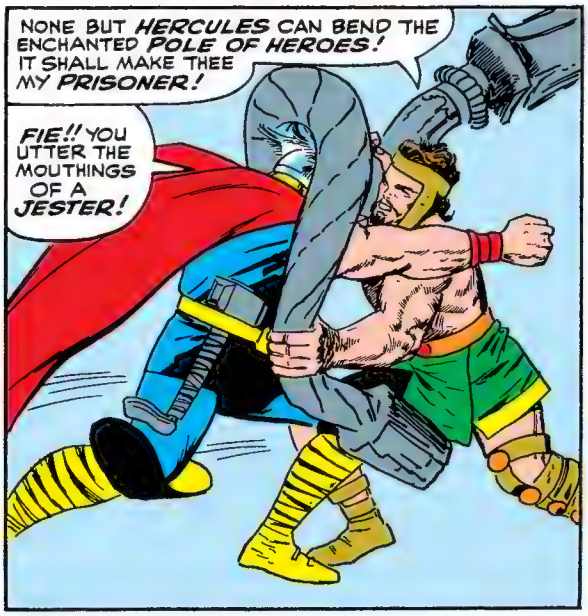

THY HAMMER POSSESSES POWER INDEED... BUT THE GOLDEN MACE OF HERCULES SHALL PROVE MORE THAN THY MATCH!
GUARD THYSELF, THEN! FOR I SHALL TEACH THEE A LESSON IN MANNERS THAT SHALL NEVER BE FORGOTTEN!


FIRST, I CATCH YOUR WRIST ON MY HAMMER'S THONG, HURLING YOU OFF-BALANCE AS EASILY AS I MIGHT SNAP A TWIG!

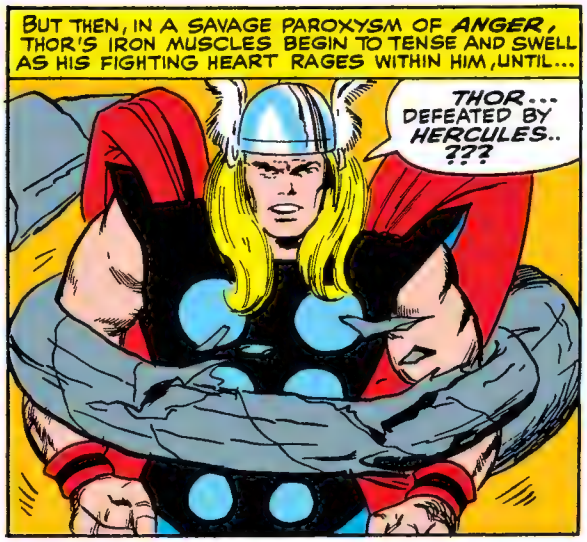

YET, BY THE TIME THE ENCHANTED MALLET REACHES THE GROUND...
NOTHING CAN KEEP HERCULES OFF-BALANCE! MY MATCHLESS STRENGTH MAKES ME THE MASTER OF EVERY SITUATION!
BUT, NO SOONER DOES THE HAMMER RETURN TO EARTH, THAN IT AGAIN TOPPLES HERCULES AS IT WRENCHES ITSELF OFF HIS WRIST AND HURTLES BACK TO THOR!
BY JUPITER!! THE MALLET SEEMS TO BE ALIVE!
BUT NOW, ENOUGH OF HAMMER AND MACE! I SHALL THRASH YOU ROUNDLY, AS YOU WELL DESERVE, WITH MY BARE FISTS!
AGREED! I, TOO, SHALL FIGHT WITHOUT WEAPON!!
BEFORE THE THUNDER GOD CAN RELEASE HIS HAMMER, THE MOST POWERFUL BLOW HE HAS EVER FELT SLAMS HIM TO THE GROUND...
NONE CAN RESIST THE SMASHING ATTACK OF HERCULES!
WHAT??! YOU GAIN YOUR FEET SO QUICKLY?! WHAT MANNER OF WARRIOR ART THOU??!
I AM THOR! THE ONE WHO SHALL PUMMEL THEE TO THY KNEES!
AND THEN, WITH ONE SINGLE, SMASHING BLOW, THE THUNDER GOD DOES WHAT NO LIVING BEING HAS EVER DONE BEFORE... HE BATTERS HERCULES OFF HIS FEET!!
WHOP!
7.

BUT, NOW IT IS THOR'S TURN TO BE AMAZED...!
YOU RECOVER WITHIN SECONDS! I HAVE NEVER SEEN THE LIKE!
NOR SHALL YOU SEE IT EVER AGAIN!
BY THE GOLDEN SPIRES, YOU FIGHT LIKE A SON OF ODIN!
WHILST THY STRENGTH IS WORTHY OF ZEUS HIMSELF!! BUT, STILL SHALL HERCULES PREVAIL!
SEE HOW I WHIP THEE AWAY FROM ME WITH AN ARM WHICH CAN FELL THE TALLEST TREE!
BUT, SEE HOW I FORCE BACK THAT ARM, AND HURL THEE BACKWARDS TO THE GROUND!
8.

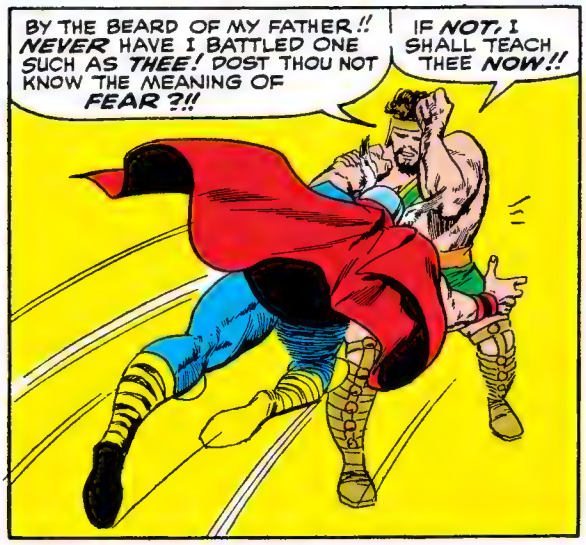

YIELD, HERCULES!! YIELD TO THOR, GOD OF THUNDER... PRINCE OF VIKINGS... SON OF ODIN!
NEVER!!
YOUR MOST SAVAGE ATTACK FAILED TO BEST ME! MY POWER IS TOO GREAT!
AND NOW, IT IS MY TURN! NOW SHALL THOR FACE THE FURY OF HERCULES' ATTACK!
I SHALL NOT SLAY ONE SO VALIANT! INSTEAD, I SHALL BIND THEE AND MAKE THEE MY CAPTIVE!
9.

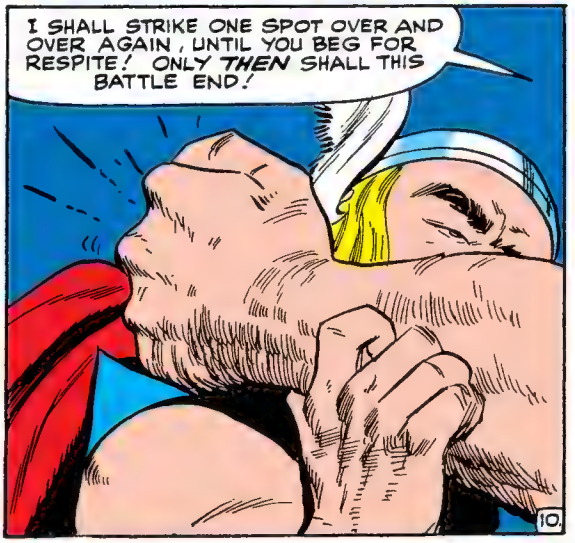

NONE BUT HERCULES CAN BEND THE ENCHANTED POLE OF HEROES! IT SHALL MAKE THEE MY PRISONER!
FIE!! YOU UTTER THE MOUTHINGS OF A JESTER!

YOUR WORDS ARE BOLD, GOLDEN STRANGER, BUT THE STRENGTH OF HERCULES HAS INDEED DEFEATED THEE!

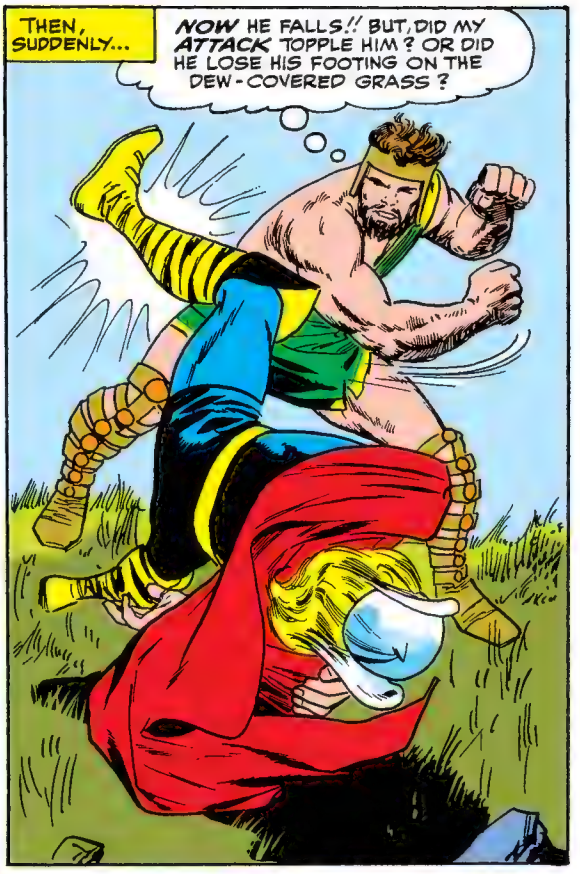

BUT THEN, IN A SAVAGE PAROXYSM OF ANGER, THOR'S IRON MUSCLES BEGIN TO TENSE AND SWELL AS HIS FIGHTING HEART RAGES WITHIN HIM, UNTIL...
THOR... DEFEATED BY HERCULES.. ???

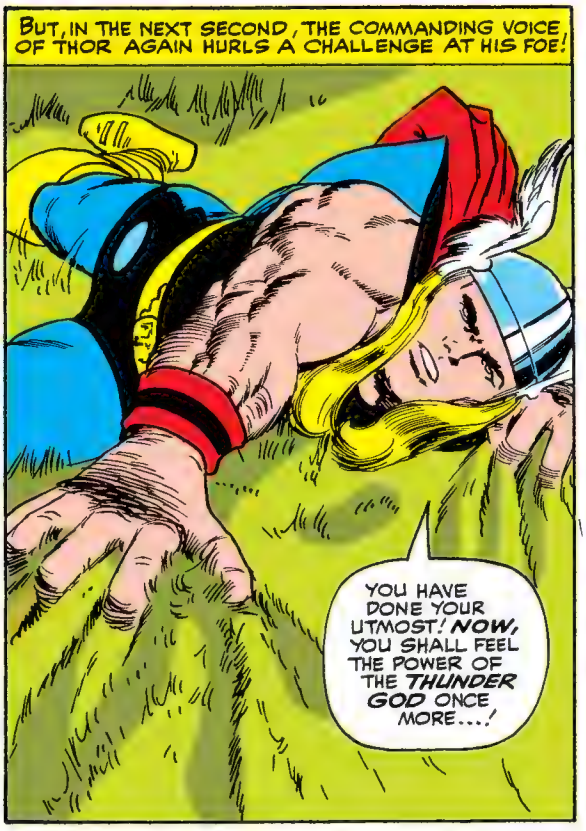
NEVER!!!

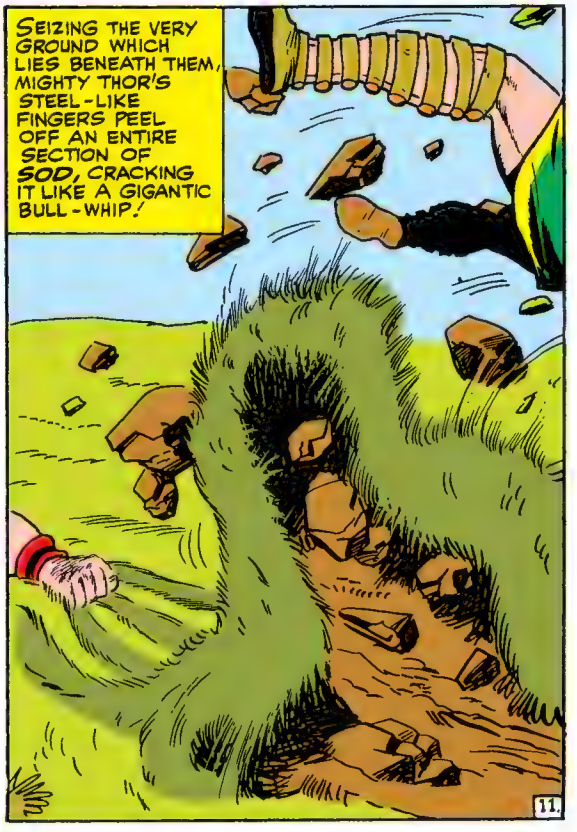

BY THE BEARD OF MY FATHER!! NEVER HAVE I BATTLED ONE SUCH AS THEE! DOST THOU NOT KNOW THE MEANING OF FEAR?!!
IF NOT, I SHALL TEACH THEE NOW!!

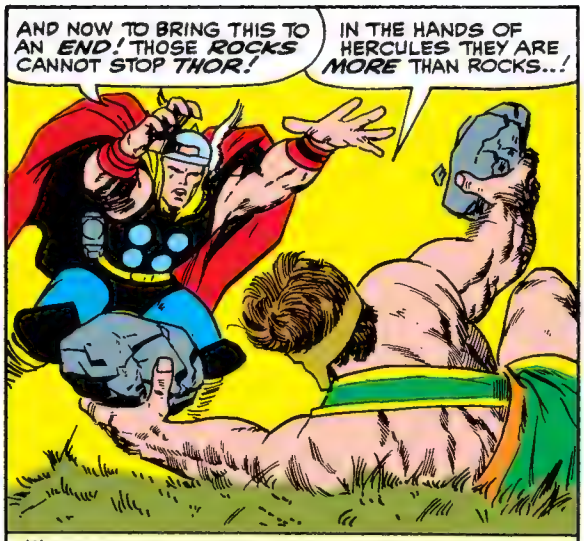

I SHALL STRIKE ONE SPOT OVER AND OVER AGAIN, UNTIL YOU BEG FOR RESPITE! ONLY THEN SHALL THIS BATTLE END!

AGAIN AND AGAIN, HERCULES STRIKES THE THUNDER GOD UPON THE SAME SPOT... EACH BLOW STRONGER THAN THE ONE BEFORE!!
ANY OTHER WOULD HAVE CRUMBLED LONG AGO! NEVER DID I THINK I'D BATTLE ONE WHOSE STRENGTH COULD MATCH MY OWN!

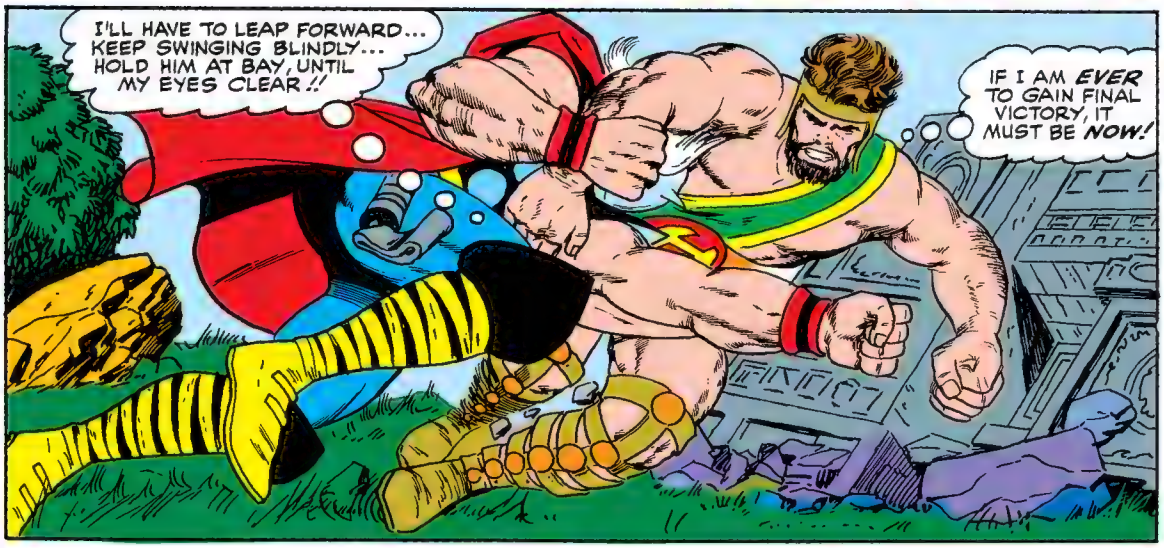

THEN, SUDDENLY...
NOW HE FALLS!! BUT, DID MY ATTACK TOPPLE HIM? OR DID HE LOSE HIS FOOTING ON THE DEW-COVERED GRASS?

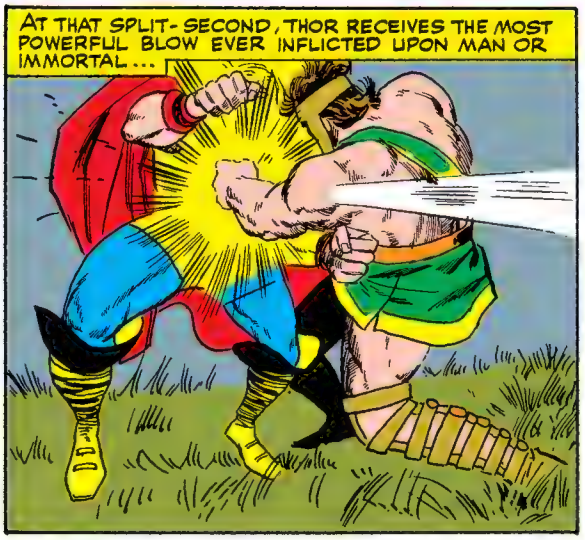

BUT, IN THE NEXT SECOND, THE COMMANDING VOICE OF THOR AGAIN HURLS A CHALLENGE AT HIS FOE!
YOU HAVE DONE YOUR UTMOST! NOW, YOU SHALL FEEL THE POWER OF THE THUNDER GOD ONCE MORE...!

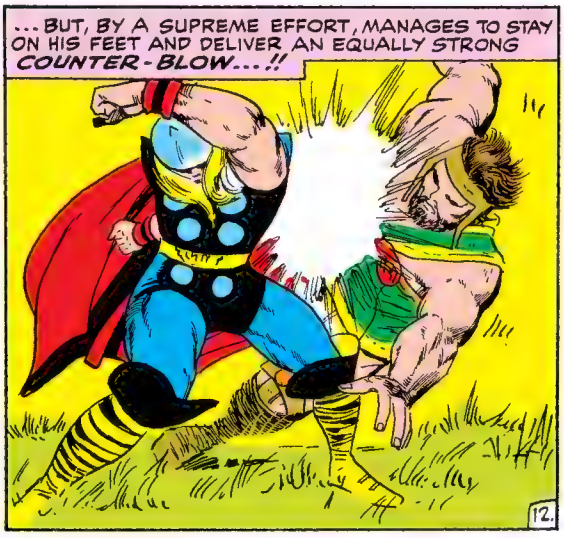

SEIZING THE VERY GROUND WHICH LIES BENEATH THEM, MIGHTY THOR'S STEEL-LIKE FINGERS PEEL OFF AN ENTIRE SECTION OF SOD, CRACKING IT LIKE A GIGANTIC BULL-WHIP!

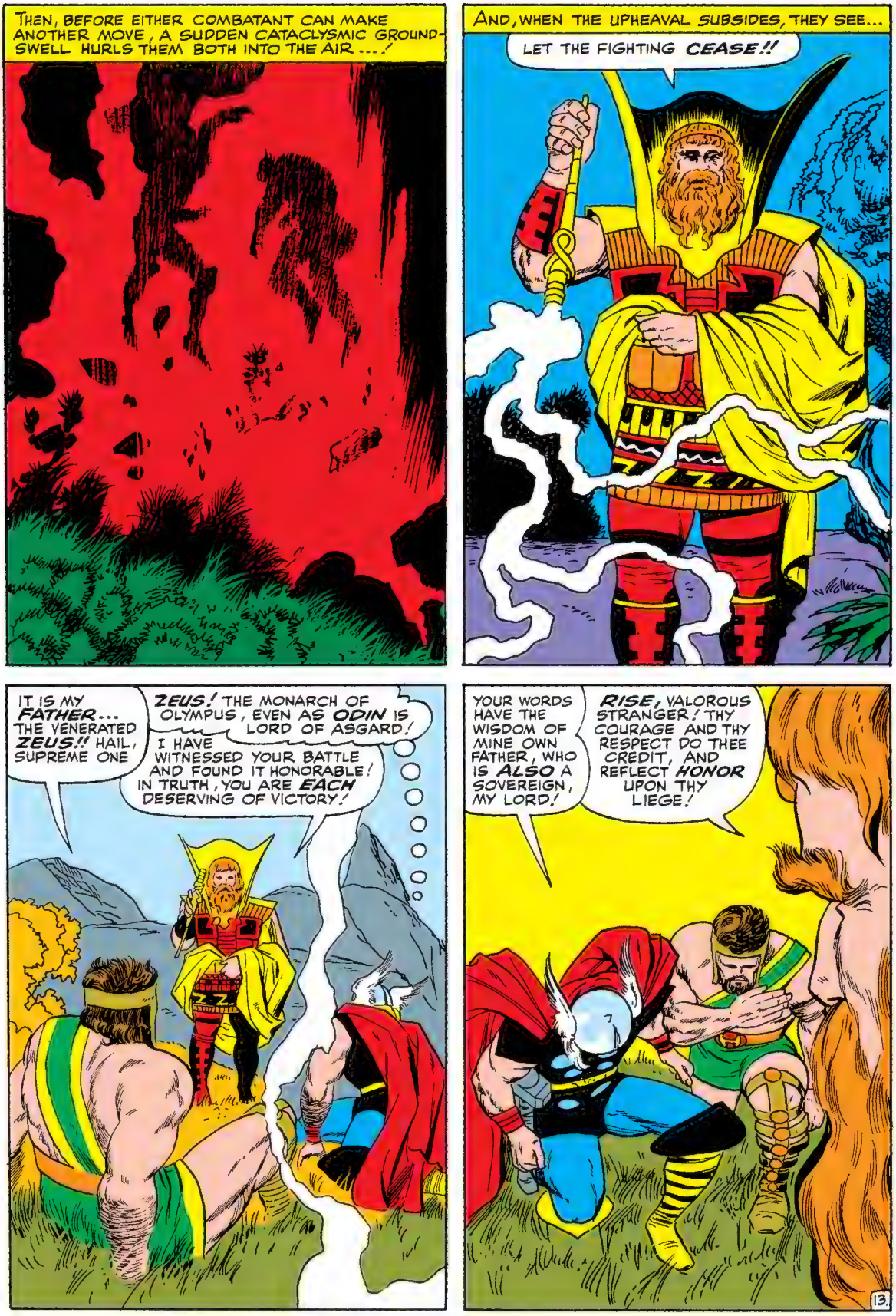

AND NOW TO BRING THIS TO AN *END!* THOSE *ROCKS* CANNOT STOP *THOR!*
IN THE HANDS OF HERCULES THEY ARE *MORE* THAN ROCKS..!
WITH THOSE WORDS, THE TITANIC SON OF ZEUS CLAPS HIS HANDS TOGETHER WITH THE POWER OF COLLIDING COMETS...!

HE HAS REDUCED THE ROCKS TO THE FINEST *POWDER..!!*
IT FILLS MY EYES! I CANNOT *SEE!!*

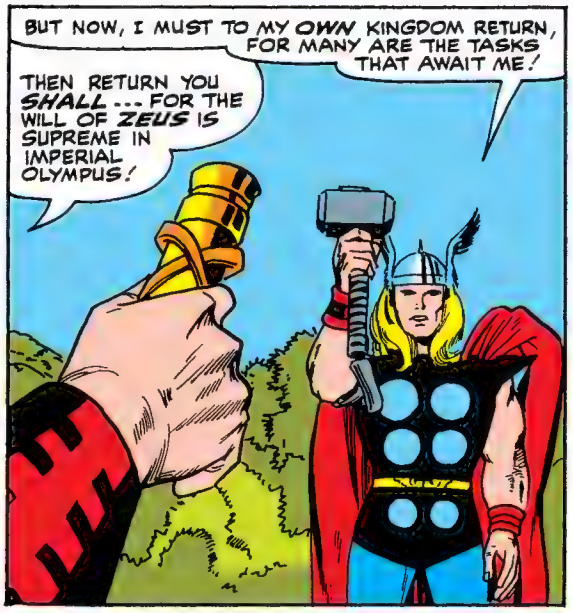

I'LL HAVE TO LEAP FORWARD... KEEP SWINGING BLINDLY... HOLD HIM AT BAY, UNTIL MY EYES CLEAR!!
IF I AM *EVER* TO GAIN FINAL VICTORY, IT MUST BE *NOW!*


AT THAT SPLIT-SECOND, THOR RECEIVES THE MOST POWERFUL BLOW EVER INFLICTED UPON MAN OR IMMORTAL...

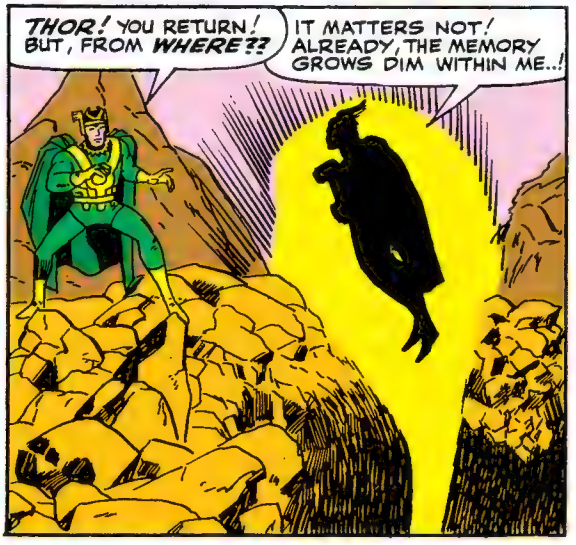

...BUT, BY A SUPREME EFFORT, MANAGES TO STAY ON HIS FEET AND DELIVER AN EQUALLY STRONG *COUNTER-BLOW...!!*

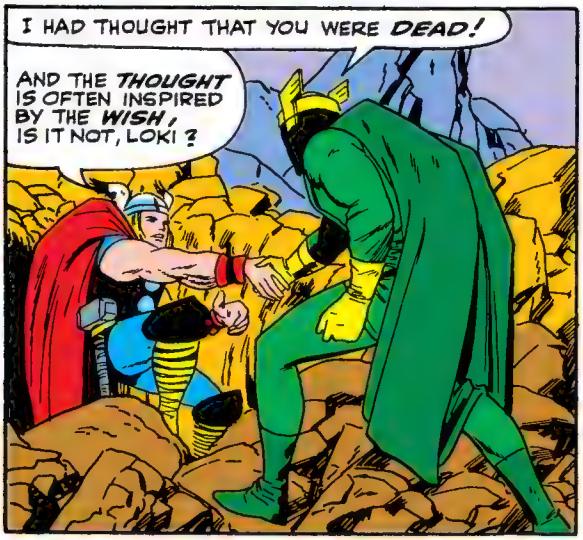

THEN, BEFORE EITHER COMBATANT CAN MAKE ANOTHER MOVE, A SUDDEN CATACLYSMIC GROUND-SWELL HURLS THEM BOTH INTO THE AIR ...!
AND, WHEN THE UPHEAVAL SUBSIDES, THEY SEE...
LET THE FIGHTING CEASE!!
IT IS MY FATHER... THE VENERATED ZEUS!! HAIL, SUPREME ONE
ZEUS! THE MONARCH OF OLYMPUS, EVEN AS ODIN IS LORD OF ASGARD! I HAVE WITNESSED YOUR BATTLE AND FOUND IT HONORABLE! IN TRUTH, YOU ARE EACH DESERVING OF VICTORY!
YOUR WORDS HAVE THE WISDOM OF MINE OWN FATHER, WHO IS ALSO A SOVEREIGN, MY LORD!
RISE, VALOROUS STRANGER! THY COURAGE AND THY RESPECT DO THEE CREDIT, AND REFLECT HONOR UPON THY LIEGE!
13

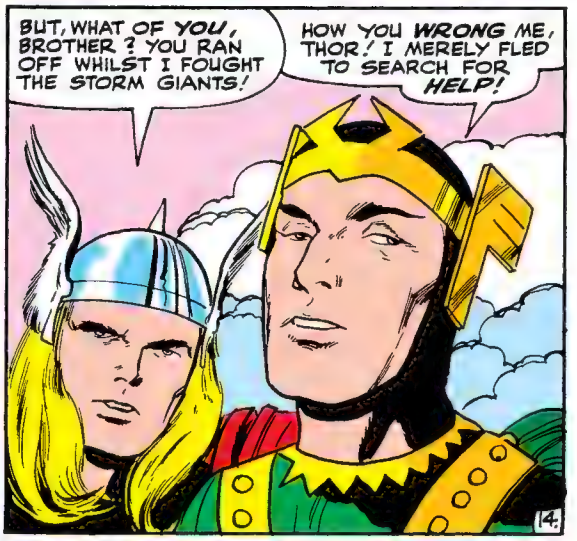
NOW CLASP YOU EACH OTHER'S HAND, FOR TRULY HAVE YOU THE POWER AND NOBILITY OF PRINCELY IMMORTALS!
THE FRIENDSHIP OF HERCULES IS THINE!
SO TOO DOES THOR CALL HERCULES FRIEND!

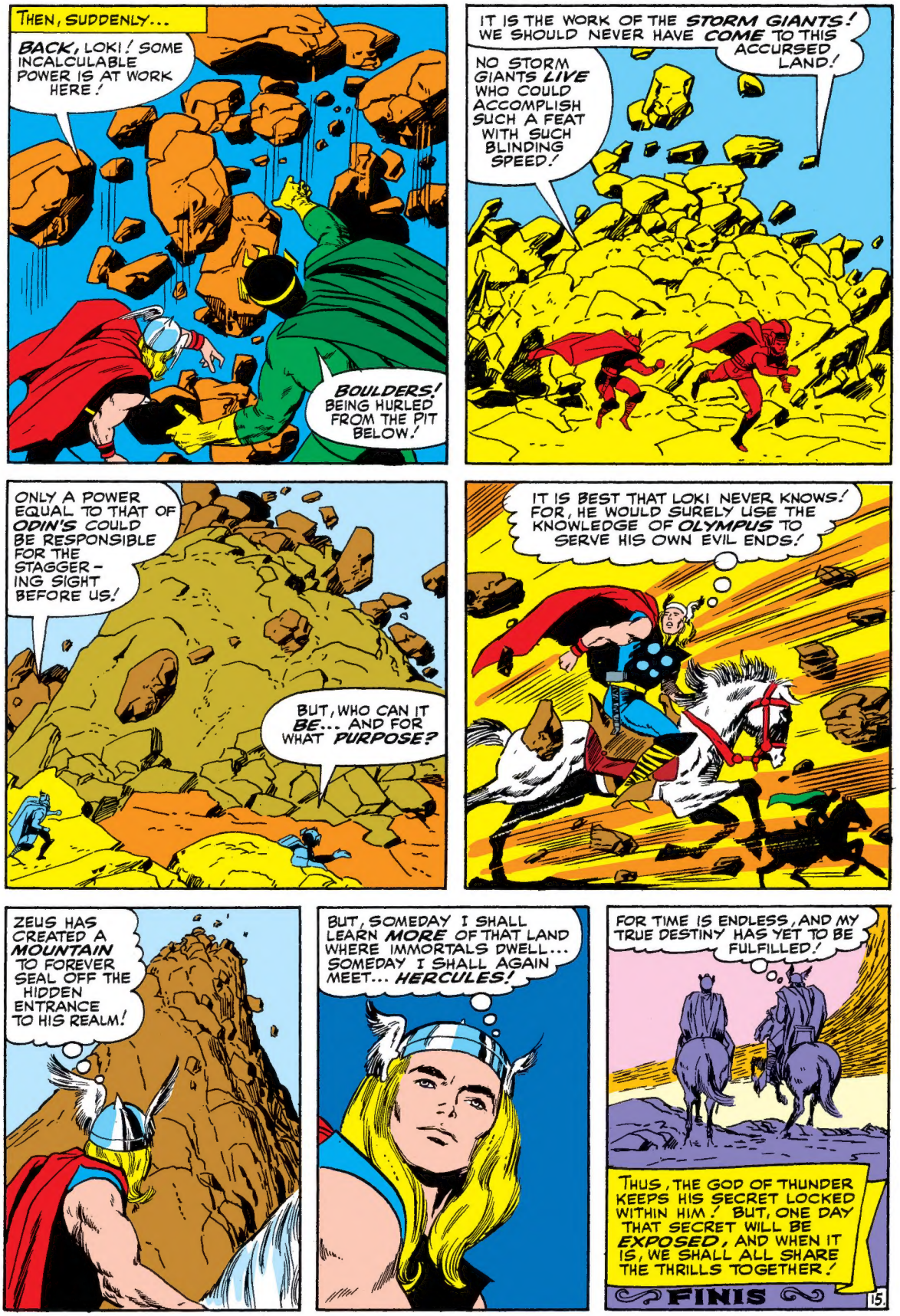

BUT NOW, I MUST TO MY OWN KINGDOM RETURN, FOR MANY ARE THE TASKS THAT AWAIT ME!
THEN RETURN YOU SHALL --- FOR THE WILL OF ZEUS IS SUPREME IN IMPERIAL OLYMPUS!

TO THINE OWN WORLD I DISPATCH THEE, BY THE POWERS AT MY COMMAND!
THEN 'TIS HAIL AND FAREWELL...!


THOR! YOU RETURN! BUT, FROM WHERE??
IT MATTERS NOT! ALREADY, THE MEMORY GROWS DIM WITHIN ME..!


I HAD THOUGHT THAT YOU WERE DEAD!
AND THE THOUGHT IS OFTEN INSPIRED BY THE WISH, IS IT NOT, LOKI ?


BUT, WHAT OF YOU, BROTHER ? YOU RAN OFF WHILST I FOUGHT THE STORM GIANTS!
HOW YOU WRONG ME, THOR! I MERELY FLED TO SEARCH FOR HELP!


THEN, SUDDENLY...
BACK, LOKI! SOME INCALCULABLE POWER IS AT WORK HERE!
BOULDERS! BEING HURLED FROM THE PIT BELOW!
IT IS THE WORK OF THE STORM GIANTS! WE SHOULD NEVER HAVE COME TO THIS ACCURSED LAND!
NO STORM GIANTS LIVE WHO COULD ACCOMPLISH SUCH A FEAT WITH SUCH BLINDING SPEED!
ONLY A POWER EQUAL TO THAT OF ODIN'S COULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE STAGGER-ING SIGHT BEFORE US!
BUT, WHO CAN IT BE... AND FOR WHAT PURPOSE?
IT IS BEST THAT LOKI NEVER KNOWS! FOR, HE WOULD SURELY USE THE KNOWLEDGE OF OLYMPUS TO SERVE HIS OWN EVIL ENDS!
ZEUS HAS CREATED A MOUNTAIN TO FOREVER SEAL OFF THE HIDDEN ENTRANCE TO HIS REALM!
BUT, SOMEDAY I SHALL LEARN MORE OF THAT LAND WHERE IMMORTALS DWELL... SOMEDAY I SHALL AGAIN MEET... HERCULES!
FOR TIME IS ENDLESS, AND MY TRUE DESTINY HAS YET TO BE FULFILLED!
THUS, THE GOD OF THUNDER KEEPS HIS SECRET LOCKED WITHIN HIM! BUT, ONE DAY THAT SECRET WILL BE EXPOSED, AND WHEN IT IS, WE SHALL ALL SHARE THE THRILLS TOGETHER!
FINIS
15

A THOR BONUS FEATURE

MONTH AFTER MONTH WE HAVE SHOWN YOU SCENES OF ODIN'S IMPERIAL PALACE ... THE FABLED RAINBOW BRIDGE ... THE DEADLY LANDS OF THE TROLLS ... THE STORM GIANTS ... AND SO FORTH! BUT NOW, TO CELEBRATE OUR FIRST GREAT THOR ANNUAL, WE PRESENT A SIMPLE, ORDINARY, TYPICAL ASGARD STREET SCENE, AS THE AVERAGE ASGARDIAN SEES IT, DAY AFTER DAY!..!

YGGASDRAL (TREE of LIFE) MONUMENT

TEMPLE of TITANS

WARRIORS' WALK

GIANT BUST of ODIN

WARLOCK'S HAVEN

N
W E
TO EARTH

A

SPECIAL NOTE FROM STAN and JACK...
WE SUGGEST THAT YOU CAREFULLY SAVE THIS IMMORTAL'S-EYE VIEW OF ODIN'S REALM, FOR YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN YOU MIGHT VISIT THE GOLDEN CITY, AND THIS ACCURATE, TRUE-TO-SCALE, PANORAMIC PICTO-MAP IS SURE TO PROVE MOST HELPFUL IN LOCATING POINTS OF INTEREST!
P.S. BE SURE TO BRING YOUR CAMERA!

MUSEUM of WEAPONRY

MONUMENT to the UNKNOWN WARRIOR.

HALL of HEROES

DOME of COMBAT

TO SHOPPING CENTER

B.

THE MARVEL MASTERWORKS

ALSO AVAILABLE IN HARDCOVER

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN VOLS. 1-13
ANT-MAN/GIANT-MAN VOLS. 1-2
THE AVENGERS VOLS. 1-11
THE BLACK PANTHER VOL. 1
CAPTAIN AMERICA VOLS. 1-5
CAPTAIN MARVEL VOLS. 1-3
DAREDEVIL VOLS. 1-6
DEATHLOK VOL. 1
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DOCTOR STRANGE VOLS. 1-5
THE FANTASTIC FOUR VOLS. 1-12
THE HUMAN TORCH VOLS. 1-2
THE INCREDIBLE HULK VOLS. 1-5
THE INHUMANS VOLS. 1-2
THE INVINCIBLE IRON MAN VOLS. 1-6
IRON FIST VOL. 1
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NICK FURY, AGENT OF S.H.I.E.L.D. VOLS. 1-2
RAWHIDE KID VOLS. 1-2
SGT. FURY VOLS. 1-3
THE SILVER SURFER VOLS. 1-2
THE SUB-MARINER VOLS. 1-4
THE MIGHTY THOR VOLS. 1-10
WARLOCK VOLS. 1-2
THE X-MEN VOLS. 1-8
THE UNCANNY X-MEN VOLS. 1-7

THE MARVEL AGE

It was August 1961 and change was hitting the newsstands. *Fantastic Four* #1 did not feature the squeaky-clean heroes of yesteryear. These were real characters placed in extraordinary circumstances. They lived together, they fought among themselves—and sometimes, they even lost to the bad guys. This was more than a change in attitude: It was the beginning of something entirely different—the Marvel Age of Comics!

Thanks to the fertile imaginations of Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, Steve Ditko and others, an unending list of heroes followed the FF with ever-increasing acclaim and popularity: the Amazing Spider-Man, the Mighty Thor, the Incredible Hulk, Daredevil, Iron Man and the X-Men, to name but a few. These were the Marvel heroes, born of conflict and a continuous struggle to balance human lives with superhuman responsibilities.

The *Marvel Masterworks* series was created to give comic-book readers everywhere the chance to experience the greatest comics the world has known as they were originally presented.

THE GOLDEN AGE

As the Great Depression wore on and the specter of war hung over the heads of all Americans, a new entertaining escape from the newspapers' horrifying realities was born: the comic book. Within their four-color pages, larger-than-life super heroes could make short work of America's foes, giving readers of all ages hope for victory against the real-life enemies that faced the United States.

At the forefront of this new medium was Timely Comics, a young company staffed by such legendary talents as Carl Burgos, Bill Everett, Joe Simon, Jack Kirby and Stan Lee. These skilled writers and artists created a vast array of characters that would give rise to the Marvel Universe!

GOLDEN AGE ALL-WINNERS VOLS. 1-3
GOLDEN AGE CAPTAIN AMERICA VOLS. 1-5
GOLDEN AGE DARING MYSTERY VOLS. 1-2
GOLDEN AGE HUMAN TORCH VOLS. 1-3
GOLDEN AGE MARVEL COMICS VOLS. 1-5
GOLDEN AGE MYSTIC COMICS VOL. 1
GOLDEN AGE SUB-MARINER VOLS. 1-3
GOLDEN AGE U.S.A. COMICS VOL. 1
GOLDEN AGE YOUNG ALLIES VOL. 1

THE ATLAS ERA

Seeing super heroes waning, Timely Comics evolved into Atlas Comics and took on a vast new range of genres: science-fiction tales of outer space adventures and unimaginable monsters; realistic war comics; buxom jungle heroines; horror comics that would become the center of a moral panic that rocked the industry; and romance comics for the emerging teen audience. Even the classic costumed heroes of the '40s retooled to take on the threat of Communism. From Western gunfighters to crime to horror, Atlas had it all!

ATLAS ERA BATTLEFIELD VOL. 1
ATLAS ERA BLACK KNIGHT/YELLOW CLAW VOL. 1
ATLAS ERA HEROES VOLS. 1-3
ATLAS ERA JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY VOLS. 1-3
ATLAS ERA JUNGLE ADVENTURE VOLS. 1-2
ATLAS ERA MENACE VOL. 1
ATLAS ERA STRANGE TALES VOLS. 1-4
ATLAS ERA TALES TO ASTONISH VOLS. 1-3
ATLAS ERA TALES OF SUSPENSE VOLS. 1-3
ATLAS ERA VENUS VOL. 1

JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY WITH THE MIGHTY THOR
112 JAN
THE EPIC BATTLE OF THE AGE!
THE MIGHTY THUNDER GOD! VS. THE INCREDIBLE HULK!
HERE IT IS! THE BATTLE YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR!
113 FEB
MIGHTIER THAN EVER!
AT LAST! THE THUNDER GOD REVEALS HIS TRUE IDENTITY TO JANE
BUT WAIT'LL YOU SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN HE DOES!!!
114 MAR
THE START OF ANOTHER UNFORGETTABLE SUPER-EPIC!
"THE STRONGER I AM, THE SOONER I DIE!"
115 APR
A NEW EXPERIENCE AWAITS!
"THE VENGEANCE OF THE THUNDER GOD!"
116 MAY
THE TIME HAS COME FOR
THE TRIAL OF THE GODS!
117 JUNE
THE MOST POWERFUL AVENGER OF ALL TIME THUNDERS...
"INTO THE BLAZE OF BATTLE!"
MIGHTIER THAN EVER BEFORE!
118 JULY
TO KILL A THUNDER GOD!
INTRODUCING: THE INDESTRUCTIBLE DESTROYER!
119 AUG
MIGHTY THOR HAS NO CLOAK BUT TO FACE THE MIGHTY FORESTER... FOE OF ALL TIME
THE UNBEATABLE DESTROYER, WHOSE STRENGTH SURPASSES THAT OF THE THUNDER GOD HIMSELF!
WHILE IN FAR-OFF ASGARD, EVEN THE EVIL LOKI FEARS THE RESULT OF THIS EPIC BATTLE!
FOR ONLY ODIN HAS THE POWER TO STOP THE DESTROYER—HOW WILL IT FOREHOLD TO INTERVENE?
ALL THIS AND MORE AWAITS YOU IN
THE DAY OF THE DESTROYER!
SPECIAL KING SIZE ANNUAL!
72 BIG PAGES
#1 1965
ALL-NEW THOR VS. HERCULES
PLUS... THE MOST REVOLTING FIRST APPEARANCE OF THOR'S MOST DEADLY FOES...
SEE THE CLASH OF TITANS!

THE MARVEL MASTERWORKS PROUDLY PRESENT THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS COMICS AND SUPER HEROES FROM THEIR VERY BEGINNINGS IN A SERIES OF PAINSTAKINGLY RESTORED ARCHIVAL VOLUMES.

MARVEL

COLLECTING *JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY* #111-120 & *ANNUAL* #1